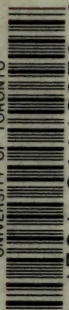



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A
HISTORY OF LONDON.

VOL. I.

A
HISTORY OF LONDON.

BY
W. J. LOFTIE,

B.A., F.S.A.,

AUTHOR OF 'ROUND ABOUT LONDON,' 'IN AND OUT OF LONDON,'
'MEMORIALS OF THE SAVOY,' ETC.

~~~~~  
WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.  
~~~~~

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, 55, CHARING CROSS, S.W.
1884.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE ROBERT NICHOLAS FOWLER, M.P.,
LORD MAYOR OF LONDON,

THIS BOOK
IS, BY PERMISSION, RESPECTFULLY

Dedicated.

PREFACE.

IN revising the following pages for a second edition, I have received much kind help from various correspondents. I have also endeavoured to profit by the newspaper criticisms which I have seen, and can only complain that they have been so uniformly tender to my feelings that my many errors have been overlooked. At the suggestion of one of them, however, I have added as an appendix a sketch of the commercial history of the city, a task in which I have had much kind assistance from Mrs. John Richard Green, who allowed me access to so far unpublished notes by her lamented husband. By the kindness of the Guildhall authorities I am enabled to give entire the curious list of aldermen and their wards referred to in Chapter VII. The Rev. Canon Venables, Precentor of Lincoln, was so good as to send me a very complete list of errata, of which I most gladly avail myself. I have also specially to thank Mr. Henry Hucks Gibbs, Mr. John Westlake, Q.C., Mr. Lionel Robinson, and Mr. C. A. Cook, as well as the gentlemen mentioned in the preface to the first edition, for important items of information.

December, 1883.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.



IN the multiplicity of books on London it is strange that for more than forty years no history has appeared. Thomas Allen's five volumes reached a second edition in 1839, being continued, but unfortunately not corrected by Thomas Wright. Since that time no serious attempt has been made to tell the story of our great city's origin and growth, although the materials have gradually accumulated in abundance: and many chronicles, diaries, and collections of records have been printed. The 'Liber Albus' and the 'Liber Custumarum' have been edited by the lamented Henry Thomas Riley for the Rolls Series, and extracts from the Letter Books for the Corporation. He also issued a translation of a chronicle which he attributed to Fitz Thedmar, and the Camden Society published several later London chronicles. Finally, last year Canon Stubbs printed his 'Annales Londinienses' and 'Annales Paulini.' Not to mention everything of the kind, it will easily be seen that a complete change has come over the aspect of London history in a single generation. Allen had no better authority than Stow, but we have the very documents from which Stow worked, and many others besides. It is a matter for surprise that they have been so little

used. An allusion to the existence of any authority higher than Stow's is of the rarest occurrence. One brilliant exception only proves the truth of this assertion. The papers contributed by Mr. Clark and Mr. Green to a volume entitled 'Old London,' published in 1867, show what might have been done by literally hundreds of writers who yet have preferred the beaten track.

I have endeavoured, therefore, in the first of these volumes to weave the history of the city of London as told by the chroniclers into a continuous narrative: prefacing it with a topographical account of the site, and by an attempt to describe the effects on London of the Roman and Saxon invasions. The mediæval history includes that of the guilds, the wards, the churches, the monasteries, and the companies.

Of the later period, so well illustrated by Maitland, Malcolm, Lysons, and others, I have said comparatively little, as their works are well known and generally accessible. Such subjects as the great plague, the churches of Wren, the rise and progress of banking, and the modern commercial development of London would each require for adequate treatment a volume to itself, and, in fact, many such volumes exist. I have therefore endeavoured to state the mere outline in each case and to refer my readers to the authorities consulted.

The second volume contains a detailed account of each parish of the suburbs, prefaced by a sketch of the history of Middlesex. Here the continuous method has of necessity been abandoned: but I have directed my attention in each chapter chiefly to an attempt to show the origin and growth of the present condition of the

suburbs, with special reference to the accumulations of land in the so-called "Great Estates." I have in almost all cases tried to omit mere local gossip, unless it happened to be of a kind likely to illustrate the history, or had not been already noticed by other writers. I have avoided as much as possible such things as processions, executions, duels, and the loves of Charles II. : but I have endeavoured to trace each manor from its earliest mention to the present day, and to explain local names and other circumstances by the history. I trust that the numerous maps and plans may prove interesting as showing in so many cases a state of things which has passed away for ever, and as accounting for what we see by what our forefathers saw when so much that is now densely populated lay in open fields.

I should be sorry to be understood as disparaging the delightful memoirs of Cunningham, Leigh Hunt, Jesse, and others. They are entertaining to read, and if they add very little to our real historical knowledge, they at least serve to keep alive an interest in scenes and places which might otherwise be passed by. The worst of them is that they set a bad example, and their imitators have produced by the dozen, nay, by the hundred, books in which truth has been a secondary object, books which bristle with errors, and which are so far from history that they are not even good fiction. There is not a mistake in Stow or Cunningham that they have not taken up and expanded, accepting guesses as certainty, and asserting boldly what their authorities cautiously conjectured. To take a single example: among the almost countless lists that exist of the mayors and sheriffs, there is not one

which has not been directly founded on Stow's. From the imperfection of his materials, it was necessarily imperfect, and was only completed by a system of elaborate, but often erroneous guessing. Yet contemporary chronicles containing the correct names are in print in abundance, and overlap each other in such a way as to make the task of forming a new list a mere school-boy's exercise.

I ought to mention, in order that any critic who is kind enough to notice this book may be saved the trouble of arranging "parallel passages," that I have been in the habit for many years, as I pursued my investigations, of writing articles on old London and its environs in various periodicals, chiefly the *Quarterly* and *Saturday Reviews*, and the *Archæological Journal*. I have received much kind help from various quarters, and have to thank Mr. C. Trice Martin of the Record Office, Dr. Reginald Sharpe of the Guildhall, and Mr. W. M. Trollope of Westminster, for replies to questions which they must often have considered exceedingly troublesome if not impertinent. I have obtained much information from Mr. J. Henry Middleton, who kindly gave me the elaborate plan of Westminster Abbey which illustrates Chapter XVI. Mr. J. J. Stevenson kindly gave me leave to use one of the illustrations of his 'House Architecture,' for which I heartily thank him; as well as Mr. John Ward, F.S.A., for the gift of a view of Buckingham Gate.

I have also to acknowledge the sympathy and ever ready assistance I received from the deeply lamented John Richard Green, whose death in the maturity of his powers is announced even as I write. To his

encouragement and advice I owe it that I ever commenced the studies which have resulted in the production of this book. His inexhaustible stores of knowledge and his unfailing historical judgment were my constant resource during the many years in which I have been engaged in gathering materials and placing them in order. If I could have had his help until my work was completed I might have solved difficulties which now seem insuperable.

I trust that some of the problems which I have stated may awaken an interest in the minds of investigators able to solve them. We know very little, for instance, about the history of guilds and companies, about the origin of the office of alderman, about the early division of parishes, and many other subjects at which I have been obliged only to hint. Hitherto the most competent antiquaries have avoided such questions. Yet they are of the highest interest, and I can only regret to have been able to do so little towards giving them a satisfactory answer. Let me conclude these "fore words" with a quotation from 'Twelfth Night,' and without further apology

" I pray you let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and things of fame
That do renown this city."

March, 1883.

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MAP OF THE
WEST BOURNE, TY BOURNE
AND
HOLE BOURNE & FLEET.

Scale

1 mile

HISTORY OF LONDON.

CHAPTER I.

THE SITE OF LONDON.

LONDON is the name of an ever-widening tract of country covered by the buildings of a city already so large that it is equalled by no other in the world. We may even doubt if any city of the past was so great. Its population is known to a unit ; and as there is no such trustworthy information to be had about any ancient city, it is impossible to compare London with Rome, or Babylon, or Memphis. But as compared with Paris, the nearest competitor, London is almost twice as large ; and as compared with New York, it is three times as large. As compared with cities in our own islands, London exceeds Glasgow or Liverpool by more than three million inhabitants.*

The growth of London has been very rapid in modern times. Those of us who can remember it for a dozen years are already unable to trace the older features of many places over which the resistless tide of building has crept. When the Crystal Palace was placed in Hyde Park a little more than thirty years ago, there were only

* Paris, 2,225,910 (1881). New York, 1,206,590 (1880). Glasgow, 511,532 (1881). Liverpool, 552,425 (1881). London, 3,832,441 (1881). In 1801, it was 958,863.

a few isolated villas between it and Brompton. When it was removed to the top of Sydenham Hill there were not even villas between it and Dulwich. Now, in 1882 the statue of Prince Albert looks out over a sea of houses from Hyde Park to the top of Sydenham Hill, uninterrupted save by the Thames. For a time the suburbs of London were confined within the hundred of Ossulston, and a corner of Surrey; now the whole of the hundred has disappeared, and is no longer reckoned among the divisions of Middlesex; while on the other side of the river the hundred of Brixton has been similarly devoured, and Greenwich in Kent is as much a part of London as Wapping or Chelsea. The streets extend far into Essex, and there are suburbs even in Hertfordshire.

As the houses advance, the natural features are obliterated. The shady lanes, the palings and orchards, the green meadows where we were wont to be thankful for a moment's respite from the din and bustle of the streets, are turned into villas first, then into rows of houses. The hollows are levelled up, the hills are levelled down. The brooks no longer run, the trees and the grass no longer grow. There is no more seed-time or harvest for the land the great city covers. The scanty vegetation which may still be found within its boundaries is artificial, for even the sky is invisible during a great part of the year. All seasons are alike to the thorough Londoner. The summer heat only drives him to the shady side; the winter wind does but make him call a cab. The railways, under the pretence of taking him farther and farther out of town, only bring the town farther into the country, and cover a larger district with villas and avenues which are merely mockeries of country villages and natural woods

For my present purpose, therefore, which is to describe the London area as it was before the houses, it may be convenient not to go beyond the valley bounded by Hampstead on the north and Sydenham on the south ; although we are constantly being reminded that the tide has long ago overflowed these limits, especially to the south, and has poured down the sunny slopes far into Kent and Surrey. I shall ignore Norwood, reckon Croydon a country town, and speak as if Anerley was really what its name is said to import—a place remarkable for its lonely situation.

The London district, thus restricted, lies between two lines of heights, and is traversed by a winding river of considerable width. The northern range is the highest, rising at Highgate to 424 feet, and at Hampstead to about twenty feet more. The southern range nowhere attains a greater elevation than 370 feet, but we may note that while Highgate and Hampstead stand comparatively alone, Sydenham Hill and Denmark Hill are flanked by several minor heights, such as Nunhead and Forest Hill. The northern range, too, differs from the southern in another particular ; it does not fall to the level of the water at once ; but between it and the lowest ground there is interposed a line of intermediate heights, some of them rising above 100 feet. It was on one of these minor hills that the original nucleus of London was placed. But in one important respect, its position was utterly different from what it now appears. When London was confined to the hill above the Wallbrook, the water of a broad lagoon was stretched in front of it to the south, filling the valley toward the Surrey hills, and washing almost to their feet. Though Camberwell and Peckham may even then have been dry ground, they were on the margin of a vast shallow lake, interspersed

with marshes and dotted with islets. The river flowed from Lambeth to Deptford, or from Chelsea to Blackwall, at every high tide, and at low water left little land between. Now it is first deflected to the northward as it passes Westminster, it turns to the east at Charing Cross, at Rotherhithe it starts in a southerly direction, and, when it has rounded the Isle of Dogs, runs northward again to Blackwall. The Isle of Dogs, before the docks covered all its interior surface, was for the most part seven feet below high water mark. The land on which Lambeth and Kennington and Newington stand was river or morass, the site of Southwark and Bermondsey was a string of little islands. Other places were left dry at every change. The river brought down quantities of soil, mud, sand, gravel; and one by one little settlements could be made and embankments could be thrown up to protect the marshes. That such is the history of many of the South London districts is evident from their names, and still more evident if we inquire into the level to which they have been artificially raised. Upper Kennington Lane is in places only about eighteen inches above the Thames. The Old Kent Road, a thoroughfare on which the made earth is everywhere deep, rises sometimes no more than seven feet; and Southwark Park, in spite of modern filling, is six feet below Thames high water. There are one or two spots in the Bermondsey district which, on an exact map, have a minus-sign before the number which denotes their level, and are, like Dutch "polders," actually below high water mark.

One by one the little eyots became islands dotting the lagoon, one by one the marshes were embanked and became meadows; so that, when the Romans ran their great southern road across a bridge to South-

wark, and on piles and embankments to the higher levels inland, the whole peninsula gradually became habitable.

But there are other low-lying districts in London. The Isle of Dogs represents the delta of what was, at a not very remote period, a tidal estuary. The Lea river, flowing down from the wooded hills of Essex and Hertfordshire, was wide and full. To the west also, an estuary filled what is now St. James's Park, and an island, which is first known in history as the Thorn-ey was at its mouth. In the ornamental water, we trace the last remnant of an inlet from whose surface Westminster gradually rose into the daylight of modern history. Thickets may have given it the older name. Centuries before the western monastery had been raised to afford its sanctuary to human fugitives, the wild deer swam over to hide from the savage hunter. A skeleton found under the foundation of the Victoria Tower in the new Palace of Parliament, tells of an age when antlered stags roamed through the forest, and when the men who slew them, slew them with weapons of stone.

Above that part of the Thames Lagoon which is represented by the flats of Pimlico, flats only reclaimed in our own day, rose and rises the westernmost and highest of the low range of hills which I mentioned above. Each hill is separated from the next by a valley, through which a brook flowed; and the whole range runs in an easterly direction in a line not quite parallel to the edge of the river, but so tending to the south that while Campden Hill is three-quarters of a mile inland, Tower Hill is on the bank. The westernmost rises to a height of 130 feet. We now call its northern slope Notting Hill, and the eastern Bayswater Hill: but these are all designations of the same eminence, which is divided from

the next by a brook, the West Bourne. The West Bourne originally fed the Serpentine, but it now flows underground, if it flows at all, and is degraded to the rank of a sewer.

Going eastward, we next ascend to the sandy plateau known in history as Tyburn, although by right it should bear some other name. It falls short of the proportions of Campden Hill by more than forty feet, but seen from the lower lawns of Hyde Park it appears to rise somewhat abruptly, and no doubt before the levelling hand of modern man had been employed in rounding it, was steep, if not precipitous. Down to the last century it was covered by a barren heath, and its summit at the Edgware Road was almost flat. The southern edge approached very near the head of the little estuary of which I have spoken as being now St. James's Park. If we stand within Cumberland Gate and look due south over the only open ground we can now find on the whole hill, we can easily, if the day is clear, obtain an idea of the ancient geography of what is now the "West End." All the districts to the south, as far as the Thames, are on a much lower level. The nearest high ground we can descry is very far off. As the sun gleams on the roof of the Crystal Palace, we recognise Sydenham Hill. At our feet is the river, shallow and wide—so shallow indeed, at times, that it is no mere tradition which affirms the existence of a ford at Westminster. On the right is the valley through which the West Bourne took its course, and on the left, if we could strip off Brook Street and Grosvenor Street, and the adjacent quarter as far as South Street, we should be able to follow the windings of another stream. How entirely the face of nature has been altered may be seen in a moment if, when passing through Davies Street towards Berkeley Square, the

curious traveller will turn to the left into Bourdon Street. Fifty yards off he will see the valley through which the Tyburn ran, and can judge how much the ground rises on either side.

The course of the Tyburn was carefully followed and mapped before it made its last appearance in daylight.* Its source was in Conduit Fields, not far from the "Swiss Cottage," on the first slopes of Hampstead. Thence it ran for a few hundred yards through the Regent's Park, across the road at Sussex Place, between Gloucester Place and Baker Street, across the Marylebone Road, and turning westward, under Madame Tussaud's, by South Street to the foot of the High Street of St. Marylebone.† Thence it is easily traced to Oxford Street, for Marylebone Lane once overhung the left bank of the stream, and marks its windings for us. The brook ran nearly along Mandeville Place, crossed Wigmore Street, and reached Oxford Street at Gee's Court. To trace its further course we must follow the lowest levels of the ground as best we can through a labyrinth of lanes behind the fine houses in Bond Street; and tending a little to the west, through South Molton Lane, across Brook Street, by Avery Row to Grosvenor Mews, just behind the Grosvenor Gallery. Little Bruton Street and some more mews take us to Berkeley Square, at the foot of Hay Hill. Thence we go through The Passage, whose hollow sounding pavement seems to betray the fact that the brook runs between the gardens of Lansdowne House on the right and those of Devonshire House on the left. We are now very near Piccadilly, but the brook again

* J. G. Waller, in the 'Journal of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society,' vol. v. I have to thank Mr. Waller for much assistance in writing this chapter.

† For the history of St. Marylebone, see chapter xxi.

turns westward for a few yards, and only reaches the Park at Engine Street (now called Brick Street), whose name probably indicated the existence of a water-wheel at some not very remote period in history. Across the Green Park the windings of the Tyburn are occasionally revealed by a line of mist, which shows that it has not been wholly dried up in its underground course. Near Buckingham Palace it divides, and while part falls, or used to fall, into the Thames through the ornamental water in St. James's Park, part also ran into the ancient abbey buildings at Westminster, having been carefully piped by the monks for their own use; and a third branch, passing close to, if not actually under the Palace, flows nearly in a straight line through Pimlico to Milbank, where, under the name of the King's Scholars' Pond Sewer, it falls into the Thames not far from the mouth of the Ranelagh Sewer, in which we recognise all that is left of the West Bourne.

The number of these small brooks across the site of modern London is very remarkable, but may be accounted for in part by the existence of the next hill after we have crossed the Tyburn and are proceeding eastward. This, the central hill of modern London, is not so high as those beyond the Tyburn and the West Bourne; but it is of far greater extent, and its southern slope is more gradual. Its highest point is at Regent's Circus North, and it extends back to Regent's Park, and south to Charing Cross and the line of the Strand, the lower slope being sometimes rather more steep, as at the Haymarket, or in Wellington Street. So thickly is it covered with streets that we cannot easily recognise the geographical features; and but for the friendly aid afforded by such an open space as Regent's Park, we might find it hard to understand that all the ground

which Oxford Street traverses from Stratford Place to Holborn Hill is upon it; that it extends northward in a wide and nearly level plain to the foot of Hampstead Hill, and that its southern slopes are skirted by Pall Mall, the Strand, and Fleet Street along a distance of not less than two miles.

We shall be able to see more clearly when observing the geological structure of the London soil, that from the dense bed of clay which is, as it were, dammed up by this hill, most of the streams which cross the site of London take their rise; but its own surface, with the exception of two little rivulets which cross the Strand—at Ivy Bridge, Adelphi, and at Milford Lane, Temple Bar—is smooth and unfurrowed. It rises ninety feet at Regent's Circus and eighty-five at Tottenham Court Road. Regent's Park occupies a kind of ridge between two slight depressions, west and east; and is backed up immediately on the north by Primrose Hill and Barrow Hill, spurs of Hampstead.* The Tyburn rose on the western side of this ridge, and on the eastern another brook, or rather river, wound along through steep banks, turning more and more to the south, until, as we descend Holborn Hill, it stops for the time our further progress. We are on the edge of the Fleet, the eastern boundary of our great west-central hill.

The Fleet† has wholly disappeared now, but it was once a very prominent feature of London geography. Both it and the Tyburn took their rise in the dense clay of the region just below Hampstead, but while the Tyburn took its course towards the west, the Fleet ran

* It is probable that Primrose Hill and its companion, now crowned by a reservoir of the Middlesex Water Company, were, in part at least, artificial mounds. Tumuli existed in many places in the same district.

† J. G. Waller, 'London and Middlesex Transactions,' iv. 97.

towards the east. The Tyburn by its subdivision into several streams forms the delta of Westminster. In this respect, and indeed in its whole course, it differed in character from the Fleet; for the Fleet did not love to wander through open meadows or go miles out of its way to avoid a hill. On the contrary it seemed, wherever it came, to have made its mark as deep and indelible as it could; and its early name of Hole-bourne is easily explained when we find it running between banks so steep that in places they may be called cliffs.* The Hole-bourne was the early course of the Fleet. It is now buried under earth, pavement, arches, and the long sepulchral vaults of the main drainage system. This has been its fate from its source at Haverstock Hill to its outfall at Blackfriars. Nowhere can we trace its wanderings except by the contour of the land through which it flowed. For two miles from the so-called Vale of Health, past the Gospel Oak—where in the middle ages the parishioners came, with their priest reading his service-book, to trace and mark their boundaries—skirting the slope of Cantelowe's, now Kentish Town, leaving Camden Town on the right, it reached at last St. Pancras Church, which, far away among the fields, was noted even in the sixteenth century for its deserted air. The Hole-bourne now begins to show its character and deserve its name.

At Battle Bridge, now King's Cross, the brook begins to enter the long valley from which it only emerges when the journey is over. High clay hills are on either side. One is crowned now by the walls of Coldbath

* Yet so completely have they been covered and disguised that Stow and others have been forced to invent an "Oldbourne," and to make it flow down Holborn Hill to account for a name which, even three centuries ago, had begun to lose its special appropriateness.

Fields Prison. On another are the equally cheerful institutions of Clerkenwell. All are now covered, and it would be difficult indeed to find the slightest trace of the camp which was said to have been the resting-place of Suetonius, before his defeat of Boadicea at Battle Bridge below. Modern science might have been able, did any remains exist, to say if it was not rather an English or Danish fortification, and so confirm or refute the tradition that here Alfred won a victory. It would be rash to say now, unless indeed we might imitate an antiquary of the last century, who thought he had found still more tangible proofs of the Roman occupation.* As elsewhere on the Thames valley, mammoth bones have been discovered along the course of the Fleet; and of one such skeleton, Bagford writes to Hearne that, though some will have it the elephant lay there since the universal deluge, he for his own part, is inclined to think it was brought over by the Romans and killed in the fight by a Briton.

Ingenious as it is, this hypothesis will not suffice to explain all the discoveries of elephants along the shores of the Thames and the Lea. There have been other discoveries also, to throw a light on the early condition of Middlesex; and the remains of a vast forest on this northern shore of the estuary, may occasionally be found at no great depth. The modern decline of the Fleet, from a river to a brook, and from a brook to a drain, may be in part accounted for, as well as the decline of the smaller streams already mentioned, by remembering how much trees do to

* We cannot afford to laugh at Bagford, or Conyers his informant. In a history of London remarkable for the number and excellence of its illustrative woodcuts, this charming theory is enunciated and defended. The volumes are undated, but bear internal evidence of being less than five years old.

increase and retain moisture in the air and soil. If Hockley means a field or lea abounding with oak trees, then we have, in the name of a place on this part of the Fleet, some evidence as to both the river and the land. Scragg Hollow, Hockley in the Hole, is memorable in history as the birthplace of Jonathan Wild. It was close to where the Clerkenwell Court is now.

When the bourne emerges from behind the hills and turns into its tidal course, it becomes the Fleet. This end of our great west-central hill is now variously designated according to the side from which we view it. There is Holborn Hill, Saffron Hill, Back Hill, Ely Place, Hatton Garden, Kirby Street, or Field Lane ; but the brook preserves its characteristics to the end. The banks on the eastern side were, and are, so high that they have refused to submit to the greatest of modern obliterating agencies ; and even the railway across Ludgate Hill has left at one or two points steep ascents like that long known as Break-neck Steps. Snow Hill has been abandoned for the Holborn Viaduct ; and the whole district of Farringdon Street, which actually runs over the course of the old Fleet river, presents the inquiring geographer with a marvellous example of the power of modern engineers to disguise and change the natural appearance of a valley and a tidal estuary.

The first bridging of the Fleet must have been a serious matter. In Roman times the only direct road across it to our fourth hill, from High Holborn, that is, to Newgate, was by the Holborn Bridge. The street called Holborn Hill led to it : and Snow Hill was the way up the opposite acclivity. When another bridge was made many centuries later, it was lower down. This was the Fleet Bridge, and the road which led to

it was Fleet Street : while, as some think, the opposite hill was called after the Fleet, Flood or Lud, Ludgate.*

The Fleet formed the western bulwark of London for hundreds of years : its existence must have been one of the chief inducements which brought about the first settlement on the hill above. There was no such stream westward for many miles, no creek or harbour with such high protecting banks and a tide which flowed so far inland. The Fleet was still navigable in the reign of Edward I. Ship Court and Seacoal Lane remained till lately to tell of the time when there was a natural haven, situated in immediate proximity to the city. Such a waterway must have been a protection in war as well as a commercial port in peace, and London, seated thus on a lofty hill, with, as we shall see, a smaller harbour in its very midst, and protected on one side by such a tidal estuary as the Fleet, and on the other by the Lea, was a place of natural strength, yet admirably adapted for purposes of commerce.

Our fourth hill, then, looked westward over the Fleet, and eastward over the Wall-brook. Of its real height and its form we know little. It was included within the second Roman wall, and there are places in it where the original surface is forty feet below the present level. Its level summit extends from the west front of St. Paul's to nearly the eastern end of Cheapside : where a valley, deep and winding like part of the Upper Hole-bourne, descended to the level of the Wall-brook.†

* Others have thought "Lud" a reference to the assembly of the leod or leet in St. Paul's Churchyard. Both derivations are doubtful. See chapter xvii., vol. ii., p. 69, for a different view.

† This name is sometimes spelt with one l, but the existence of the original Roman wall on its bank was not established till lately. "Walbrook," if *wal* or *gael* means a foreigner, could be taken as an early English reference to the port of Dowgate and the merchants who came to it ; but

On the south, or river side, the hill was precipitous. There is a vague tale of some ancient remains in the corner over Dowgate, which were supposed to indicate the site of an ancient British village. Its existence is, however, very problematical. Sir Christopher Wren discovered what he considered British graves, "wherein were found ivory and wooden pins of a hard wood, seemingly box, in abundance, of about six inches long. It seems the bodies were only wrapped up and pinned in woollen shrouds, which being consumed, the pins remained entire."* But he goes on to say that "in the same row and deeper were Roman urns intermixed. This," he continues, "was eighteen feet deep or more, and belonged to the colony where Romans and Britons lived and died together."

This passage proves a few points which do not seem to have occurred to the majority of the historians of St. Paul's. If there were interments here we may be sure that this was not the site of a Roman city or fortress at the time those interments were made. Therefore this was not, as Milman and others have supposed, the hill on which the *Pretorium* stood. If it was a cemetery, it could not have been at the same period a fort. It may possibly have been a British burial-place, but Wren is careful to say that the Roman urns lay, in some cases, deeper than the British graves; and there is nothing of any other interments earlier or deeper than those where Roman urns were intermixed. The passage, in short,

the wall which overlooked it affords a better derivation. Geoffrey of Monmouth derives the name from Livius Gallus. In the Rot. Pat. Edward III. it is Walebrok.

* Wren's 'Parentalia,' p. 266, quoted in Murray's 'Handbook to St. Paul's,' p. 5, where this note comes after a general assertion that this was the site of the Roman pretorium. The interments dispose of this idea.

gives us little information ; but we do gather distinctly that, whatever it may have been before the Romans came, after they came, it was for a time at least, outside the city wall.

Another discovery has been mentioned. Camden tells us of the finding of "an incredible" quantity of skulls and bones of cattle, stags' horns, boars' tusks, and implements and vessels thought to be sacrificial. Apart from the implements there would be nothing so very incredible about this discovery. Bones and skulls and tusks have been found at other places in the Thames valley. The implements are a puzzle. Were they of pottery, of metal, or of stone? Were they knives or arrow-heads? It is absurd to try to draw conclusions worth having from traditions like these. A kitchen-midden of any kind would answer sufficiently well to the description : and there is nothing positively conclusive against the bones being those of the elephants and bears of the glacial epoch. The Romans of a later time occupied the hill, as we shall see when we come to speak of Roman London. Meanwhile, we have only to note one other point relating to this hill, and then cross the Wallbrook to the next one. In Panyer Alley is a little monument familiar to every one, since Cruikshank sketched it for Hone, with an inscription as follows :—

"When you have searched the city round
Yet still this is the highest ground."

The height here is fifty-nine feet. But we find a slightly greater elevation on the neighbouring hill,—for the site of the "Standard" on Cornhill is sixty feet above sea-level—and where a free choice existed, we may suppose the higher of the two was the first inhabited. At the same time it is well to remember that our knowledge

of the original level is extremely slight. In Paternoster Row and St. Martin's, remains have been found at a depth from twelve to sixteen feet : at St. Paul's, as we have seen, Wren found interments at eighteen. In the valley of the Wallbrook a villa floor was lately uncovered not less than forty feet below the present surface. So that it would be impossible to say that the western hill was higher or lower than the eastern ; and we may safely assert that before they were built on, neither exceeded nor fell far short of forty-five feet above the river shore below.

The Wallbrook took its rise in the fens beyond Moorgate, and flowing through a depression, still well marked, near Lothbury, passed under the site of the Church of St. Mildred's, in the Poultry, which during the middle ages was built on an archway over the brook. Thence it passed a little to the westward of the Mansion House and through a kind of ravine to a creek at Dowgate. The present street called by its name runs very nearly parallel to the course of the stream.

On the eastern hill, if anywhere, there may have been an early British fort : that is, before the coming of the Romans. The situation, guarding a little port below, and guarded itself from danger on the west by the brook, is more suitable than that on the hill of St. Paul's, where the port formed by the mouth of the Fleet was more subject to inconvenient tides ; and also, in all probability, to heavier winter floods. On the east was a wider valley, slightly sloping to the levels of the Lea, and without any high ground nearer than Barking.

Here, long before the coming of the Romans, the old Celtic chieftain of the district may have placed his fortified cattle pen. Behind him were densely wooded hills, stretching beyond Hampstead and Highgate to

St. Albans, with only the marsh of Finsbury* between. To the west the Wallbrook brawled over its stones. To the east, with an intermediate fen,† was the wide valley, where the Tower was placed in later times. He thus saw himself almost surrounded by an inland sea, whose rolling waves ebbed and flowed far up among the forests, which were afterwards to be Essex woods, past Barking to Waltham on the north-east, with a smaller estuary winding among the hills to King's Cross and Hampstead on his western frontier; and before him an archipelago of little islets in a wide lagoon. The Celtic name clung to London when everything else was changed. The derivation of "Londinium" from "Llyn-din," the lake fort, seems to agree best with the situation and the history. The Roman could not frame to pronounce the British word "Llyn," a word which must have sounded to his ears very much like "Clun" or "Lun," and the fact, if it is a fact, that Llyn was turned into Lon, goes to increase the probability that this is the correct derivation of the name. The first founder called his fastness the "Fort of the Lake," and this is all that remains of him or it.‡

* Finsbury may be the borough or bury of Fin, but cannot possibly be derived from "fen." It was early called Vynesbury.

† Marked by Fenchurch; here there can be no difficulty.

‡ In 1876 I received a letter from the late distinguished antiquary, T. G. Godfrey Faussett, of Canterbury, in which the following passage occurred:—

"Much as one hesitates about Celtic names, I have never doubted what it was that the Romans turned into Londinium—to wit Llyn-din—the lake fortress. No doubt you know both the words in Welsh, the latter now-a-days more usually 'dinas,' and common enough. Llyn you know is pronounced *Lun*, a sound which Roman lips could not make, and got over it how they could—sometimes with an o, sometimes with an i, sometimes with their u, pronounced oo. So you will find the Usk is Isca—Romney (Welsh, Rhymney) is Limenis, Ritupæ and Rutupæ are used promiscuously, &c., &c. London was in those days emphatically a Llyndin, the river itself being more like a broad lake than a stream, and behind the

Here each morning he could assemble his herdsmen, and send his cattle out to graze on the green western hills, along Holborn, or the marshes of the Strand. From his "Dun" he could watch that they did not stray too far, and could sally forth to their rescue when the wild men of some other tribe were seen descending from the northern heights. Here, perhaps, in case of extremity, he could summon his clansmen to his help, and defend his borders at Old Ford, or attack a rival at Primrose Hill. In his creek at Dowgate, too, when summer days were calm and boats could thread their way among the islets and shoals, and could venture across the lagoon, he might receive the visits of distant cousins from Greenwich, or the still rustic Stockwell. And here too, no doubt, now and then in the long course of years, a foreign merchant, tempted by the natural harbours, may have sailed up the estuary, and circumnavigated the shallow bays, offering trinkets and weapons for pearls and gold—perhaps for pale captives and red-haired girls. The first commerce of London must have been carried on in such goods as these, and a necklace or a hatchet formed in all probability its earliest import.

The geological features of the London district have been the subject of anxious investigation. For my present purpose it will not be necessary to do more than describe the surface, merely premising that two deep borings, one made at Kentish Town, in the northern suburbs, and the other at the intersection of Oxford

fortress lying the 'great northern lake,' as a writer so late as Fitzstephen calls it, where is now Moorfields. I take it it was something very like an island, if not quite—a piece of high ground rising out of lake, and swamp, and estuary." No satisfactory explanation of "Thames" has ever been offered.

Street and Tottenham Court Road, gave results as follows :—The first stratum, after a bed of alluvium, consisted of clay, which in the one place was sixty-four feet thick, and in the other 236. Under the clay were between seventy and ninety feet of “Lower London” Tertiary beds, consisting of pebbles, sand, and sometimes shells. Under these was the Chalk, 645 to 655 feet in thickness.*

The surface is very different in different places. In the north-western suburbs, for instance, and especially at Finchley, there are beds of glacial drift, rich in fossils. In some places again, as at Woolwich, are deep layers of peat. On the top of Hampstead Hill, which consists mainly of heavy clay, there is a capping of “Lower Bagshot” sand. As a general rule, however, the whole of the London district, north of the Thames, is on a surface of clay, with here and there a superficial bed of alluvial gravel or of sand, of varying depth. The line of each of the brooks, which I have described above, is marked by a bed of surface clay. The summits of the hills are of more or less pure sand or gravel. Thus Campden Hill is sandy, while the lower parts of Kensington and Holland Park are on clay; and in the whole district called South Kensington, down through Chelsea, almost to the river’s bank, there are patches of clay, of gravel, and of sand, intermixed in such a manner as to make it impossible to distinguish them. The eastern end, for example, of Cromwell Road, is on sand, the western end is on clay, as is the greater part of Earl’s Court Road; though immediately beyond the sands crop up again.

* I must refer the reader who wishes for further information to a ‘Guide to the Geology of London,’ by William Whitaker, B.A., F.G.S., which has been published by the authorities of the Geological Survey Office.

These examples are taken from a single parish, but in others it is much the same. A deep bed of sand occurs to the west of Portman Square, and a heavy bed of clay to the east; so that while Upper Seymour Street is on sand, Lower Seymour Street is on clay. It will be seen in a moment, by reference to the map, that there is here a slope towards the Tyburn, the whole of whose course is through clay.

The great "West Central" hill of which I have already said so much, is covered with alluvial gravel, the clay being, however, very near the surface. In the boring mentioned above, 22 feet are allowed for "alluvium, drift, &c."; but the figures are doubtful,* and in most places a single 2 would represent better the depth of the gravel. By the shore of the Thames along the Strand, and in the line of the Fleet along Farringdon Street, where there is not made earth there is clay. The steep ascent of Ludgate Hill is formed of a clay bank originally rising like a cliff, 40 feet above the river. The whole soil of the city is now made earth, and in places there are layers of ashes many feet in thickness. The depth of the soil varies from two causes; one, of course, being the comparative antiquity of the site; the other, the situation having been originally a hollow, now filled up as along Broad Street and Wallbrook. The ancient surface of Mincing Lane, Gracechurch Street, and Lombard Street is generally found at a depth of 17 feet; but in Mark Lane it is 28 feet, and in Fenchurch Street 22 feet. In Leadenhall Street, which stands high, the old level is found at 9 feet 6 inches. A pavement was found at Lothbury and another at Bucklersbury, both in the valley of the Wallbrook, now filled up, at a depth of 40 feet. On the western hill Wren found interments

* Mr. Whitaker puts a ? to them.

about 18 feet below the modern surface ; and in Paternoster Row, Cheapside, Bow Lane, Queen Street, the depth of the Roman remains discovered varies from 12 feet to 15 feet, as we have already seen.

The East End is more uniformly on clay than the West, especially near the river ; but great beds of alluvial drift are found in several places. I have spoken already twice of the occasional discoveries of fossils in this superficial formation, and may illustrate them further by referring to the largest find of all, that made by Sir Antonio Brady near Ilford, a place beyond my limits, but on the same soil as many parts of London. Here, in what is called brick earth,* a brown loam, much esteemed by market gardeners, which is found for the most part at low levels only and is often interbedded with gravel and sand, a large number of bones and teeth of various animals, extant or extinct, were collected. So various and remarkable are some of these remains that one might fancy the "Zoo" of the period was situated at Great Ilford. The list comprises the bison, musk sheep, Irish elk, beaver, lion, hyæna, bear, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus, besides wolves, horses, oxen, pigs, mice, and such small animals in abundance, and, above all, not fewer than three distinct kinds of elephants. In this one "incredible" discovery, as Camden might have called it, there were the teeth of as many as a hundred different mammoths of this last kind (*Elephas primigenius*).

North of London, as I have already pointed out, the clay of Regent's Park used to give birth to the water-courses traced above ; and though it is partially drained by the canal, and in other ways, it remains a deep and dense mass of very impervious character. This, the

* Whitaker, 'Geology of London,' p. 69.

London Clay of geological writers, extends eastward beyond Kentish Town, and westward beyond Paddington and the northern part of Bayswater, along St. John's Wood, Maida Vale, and Westbourne Grove: the higher ground along Hyde Park being more alluvial, although in places, especially in valleys as at Lancaster Gate, the clay comes to the surface. Near the Thames on both banks are wide beds of the so-called "brick earth," or loam, already mentioned, and the pure sand becomes less frequent.

On the south side the formation is very similar. Sydenham Hill, like Hampstead, is of clay, but without its capping of Bagshot sand. The valley, as we descend towards the Thames, is alluvial, the sand occurring rather more rarely than on the north bank. In many places there is peat, and signs of very recent watery action are abundant. At the extreme east, near Greenwich, the formation known as Thanet sands, and the Blackheath sands, and other lower tertiary beds appear; but they are beyond the limit of this book.

So far we have only observed the surface on which London has been built; but if we wish to know what lies below that surface, information is easily obtained. At the Museum of Practical Geology there is a large model, on a scale of 6 inches to a mile, showing the formation of the "London Basin" within an area of about 165 square miles; or from Turnham Green, on the west, to Barking, on the east; and from Hampstead on the north, to Penge, on the south. It shows the strata down to the "Gault," which at the time the model was made, had only been touched in two borings, one already referred to, at Kentish Town, and the other at Crossness. Since then some lower beds have been reached, but it is safe to say that the Gault underlies the

whole of London, with the "Lower Greensand" underneath it, and at a depth of over a thousand feet the "Devonian" formation. Above the Gault is the "Upper Greensand," and so far none of these strata appear on the surface. Next above them is the Chalk, which does not crop out anywhere within the limits of London, but is to be seen at the surface as near as Chislehurst. This formation is about 800 feet thick. Above it are, at varying depths, the sandy beds named after Thanet, Woolwich, and Blackheath, where they have been observed. Above them is the great bed of "London Clay," some 450 feet thick, capped here and there, as on the summits of Hampstead and Highgate, or in the upper parts of Richmond Park, by "Bagshot sands." On the surface, as we have seen, are alluvial deposits of various periods, but all postpliocene, consisting of glacial and old river drifts.

As an example of the variations of elevation in London, the following lists, giving the heights in feet as marked in the Survey maps,* may be found useful. The first gives the levels along Oxford Street and the other streets in a line with it or nearly so from Shepherd's Bush in the west to Mile End in the east. The second gives the levels along a route from Regent's Park to the Crystal Palace:—

I.	
Shepherd's Bush, 21.	Palace Gardens, 90.
Uxbridge Road Station, 26.	Orme Square, 95.
Holland Park, 33.	Broad Walk, 90.
Clarendon Road, 39.	Craven Lane, 81.
Lord Holland's Lane, 60.	Ornamental Water, 61.
Ladbroke Road, 64.	Victoria Gate, 82.
Aubrey Road, 93.	Hyde Park Gardens, 80.
	Albion Street, 79.

* Ordnance datum, $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet below Trinity high-water mark.

Fountain in Hyde Park, 77.

Marble Arch, 90.

Hereford Gardens, 92.

North Audley Street, 83.

South Moulton Street, 68.

Vere Street, 82.

Regent's Circus, N., 90.

Berners Street, 87.

Tottenham Court Road, 85.

Gray's Inn Gate, 70.

Farringdon Street, 28.

Newgate Street, 59.

Cheapside, 59.

Poultry, 50.

Cornhill, 60.

Aldgate, 54.

Goulston Street, 50.

North Street, 40.

Cleveland Street, 36.

St. Peter's Road, 35.

II.

St. Katherine's, Regent's Park, 120.

Euston Road, 90.

Regent Circus, N., 90.

Regent Circus, S., 65.

Waterloo Place, 40.

Charing Cross, 24.

Whitehall, 15.

Bridge Street, Westminster, 15.

Christ Church, 12.

Elephant and Castle, 14.

Walworth Road, 13.

Boundary Lane, 10.

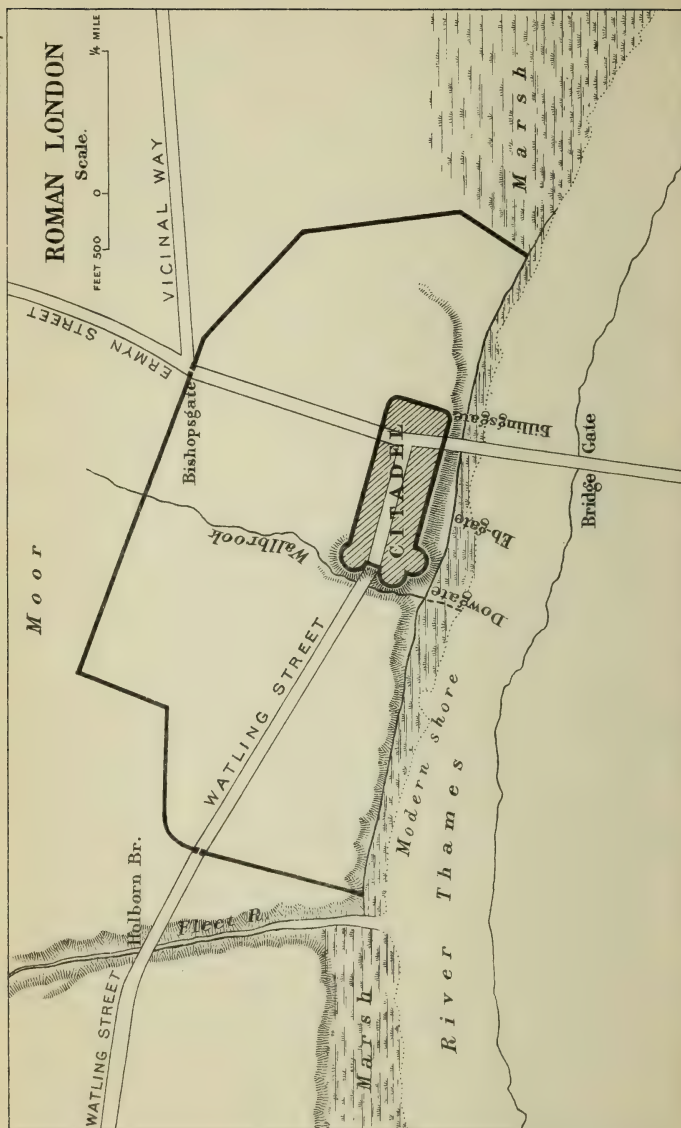
Camberwell Green, 19.

Denmark Hill, 100.

Dulwich, 91.

Crystal Palace, 365.

Such are the geological and geographical features of the site on which London has grown. To follow its growth we must look back to a period which may safely be placed near the beginning of the Christian era. The Roman general, Julius Cæsar, may or may not have visited the Llyndin on the lower Thames. He was in Britain in B.C. 54, and it is not until a hundred and six years later that we meet with the first historical notice of London.



London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

CHAPTER II.

ROMAN LONDON.

“FULL fathom five” is it buried. Moderns, standing on the accumulated ruins of a succession of cities, can but peer down through the darkness of twenty centuries, and dimly discern a few broad facts. All else is wrapped in mystery, obscured by fable, overlaid by tradition, and confused by ingenious but unsupported guesswork. The accumulation of earth over the ancient level resembles nothing more than the accumulation of literature over a few historical facts. Just as the city of the present must be cleared away, so to speak, before we can find the city of the past, so the early history must be sought by sweeping out of sight at once all we find as to the origin of London in the pages of the mediæval chroniclers, and, it must be added, almost all that has been written since up to a very late period. We must construct for ourselves such a view of the subject as will square with what we know for certain. Lud and Belin must flee away with Troy-Novant, and Llyn Dinas. St. Helen and her wall, St. Lucius and his church, must disappear with the temple of Diana on the site of St. Paul’s. It is rather in spite of what has been written about it, than with its help, that we must approach Roman London. Some theories and some traditions we may examine, but with caution, and come to our task with our minds wholly

unfettered and untrammelled.* A very few documentary facts are beyond dispute. Something has been discovered by excavations unsystematically conducted. The sites covered by modern buildings cannot be thoroughly examined. Now and then, under an old foundation, an older one comes to light ; and piecing them one by one together we obtain a few leading lines, and can reconstruct some of the ancient thoroughfares, and lay out anew some of the ancient streets.

A glance at the map suffices to bring out clearly one important point. A great many of the ancient roads—roads, that is, which may be older than the Roman occupation, or that may have been diverted or altered by the Romans on a systematic scheme—seem to converge towards a single spot on the northern or left bank of the Thames. Some of these roads, we may observe, for example, after traversing the country for perhaps hundreds of miles in a line which is nearly straight, are turned aside in order to reach that point. There must be a reason for such a course. A few moments' observation shows us what that reason was.

We have already seen that the narrowest place on the Thames, for many miles, namely, between Battersea and

* Here are some examples of the way "history" has been employed upon London :—Richard Newcourt dates it in the year of the world 2855 : Thomas De Laune says, in 1681, "This city was built 2789 years ago, that is 1108 years before the birth of Christ and (by the exactest computation) in the time of Samuel the prophet and 350 years before the building of Rome." Allen and Wright, in 1839, had not attained much further ; after repeating the old story, they continue :—"Dismissing this fable, it will appear that the Britons had formed towns, and that to them must be attributed the foundation of London. Cæsar in his 'Commentaries' denominates it the chief city of the Trinobantes." Cæsar's mention of a "civitas Trinobantum" may very possibly be London. It may very possibly be St. Albans. In short it may very possibly be one of half-a-dozen places. By "very possibly" most imposing structures of this kind have been raised.

the mouth of the river, is at a little wharf adjoining Thames Street, or just opposite to St. Olave's church on the other bank. If the roads of which I have spoken were to cross the Thames by a bridge, it is obvious that the narrowest place was the most likely to be chosen. If, on the other hand, a road was to cross by a ford, it is likely that the place where the river was most shallow would be the best. The river was deep where it was narrow and shallow where it was broad.

Now, we find that one of the widest places is between Westminster and the site of the new St. Thomas's Hospital. In ancient times it was not only wider there than it is now, but the river also spread over a large tract on both sides, which must have been marshy, and probably even foreshore, covered at every high tide. There is still a district called Lambeth Marsh, on the right bank; and St. James's Park* occupies the place of a similarly low-lying, and, not very long since, marshy place. If we look at the map, accordingly, we see that a very ancient way passed down what we call Edgware Road, and in a straight line, now slightly diverted, by Park Lane, towards Westminster, where it ran along a low ridge—now Tothill Fields—and so reached the Thames. Again, on the other side, we find a similar road seeking at once the Surrey Hills, and so crossing to the southern coast. This ancient way, which came from Chester and went towards Dover, was called by the English the Watling Street. Its course, as some have observed, follows that of the Milky Way in the starry heaven above; and the same name was applied to both. On the Surrey bank, close to St. Thomas's, is a place still called Stanegate, or "the paved way." The country road beyond was the

* So lately as the time of Charles II. occasional high tides converted the Palace of Whitehall into an island.

"Stane Street." It is therefore more than probable, and very little less than certain, that the Watling Street crossed the Thames—perhaps by a ford—just here.

This must have been before a certain remarkable event to which we next turn. There is another local name which catches our eye, just across the Thames, near London Bridge. It is Stony Street. The word "Stony" connects it at once with the Stane Street mentioned above. But how comes it there? There can be but one answer, when we observe, first, that an ancient street in the City is called Watling Street. A very small portion of it lies in the old direction, which was from a point on the bank nearly opposite Stony Street, to the north-western corner of the outer city wall. But how can we connect Watling Street with the Edgware Road? The answer comes from an old Saxon charter, of which, unfortunately, only a copy has been preserved, a charter of King Edgar,* in which we read of a "broad military road" between St. Andrew's, Holborn, and Tyburn. This road connected the Watling Street in London with the Watling Street which came down Edgware Road: and so we find that the old road which went on to a ford, at Westminster, where the Thames was widest, was diverted to the east, and passed through London to the point on the north bank at which the Thames was narrowest. The reason for the alteration must have been the opening of a better road, by ferry or bridge, at London.

To the building of the bridge London owed its early prosperity. The exact period at which it was built has not been ascertained. Coins in a continuous series were found in the bed of the river when the old foundations were taken up, ranging from the republican period to that of Honorius, which seems to prove that the bridge

* Widmore's 'Enquiry,' p. 22; and Kemble, No. 569. (See chap. xvi.)

was first made before republican coins had gone out of use; therefore early in the Roman occupation. It probably at first consisted of great beams, founded on piles, and the coins held ready to pay the toll slipped from careless fingers through the gaping boards into the stream below. Some may have been thrown in as a religious offering to the deity of the river. The piles remained and formed the foundations of the mediæval bridge. Similar piles protected Southwark, and they have been found all along the road into Kent until the marshes had been crossed and the higher ground reached.

I have spoken of the building of the bridge first because it is the first ascertained fact in the history of Roman London. The second fact is of a different kind. We arrive at the earliest distinct mention of London by name. Tacitus* tells us that in A.D. 61 it was full of merchants and their wares, but was undefended by ramparts. It was a place of comparatively large population, though of little military importance. From its abandonment by the Roman general, Suetonius, I am led to think that only a ferry (*trajectus*) existed as yet, and that the bridge had not been completed. It was a large open British town, full perhaps of Roman merchants and traders, but not a Roman colony; and it was not worth the risk of defending against Boadicea. That risk seems to have been great, or Suetonius would hardly have left the place in spite of the prayers and tears of the inhabitants. All, says Tacitus, who, on account of their unwarlike sex, or weak old age, or because of the attractions of the situation,† remained in London, were slain by the enemy.

* Tac. Annal., lib. xiv. c. 33. "At Suetonius, mira constantia, medios inter hostes Londinium perrexit cognomento quidem colonia non insigne, sed copia negotiatorum et commeatuum maxime celebre."

† "Loci dulcedo."

As to the size of London at this time we know nothing. Verulam, and Camalodunum, and London, all taken together, contained 70,000 people—that is, the number massacred amounted to 70,000. Many, no doubt, escaped; and it has often been assumed that London must have contained 30,000 people. But we are not warranted in coming to any conclusion which would make it equal in size either to Verulam or Colchester, which were colonies. All we can accept as certain is that London was the least considerable of the three.

Strange to say, we have no further mention of the place by any Roman author until after the lapse of more than two centuries. We have, therefore, to turn to the results of diggings, and other investigations of the kind, to find out something about it. The Romans do not seem at first to have perceived the advantages of the position. They had a small fortified town, perhaps only a barrack, here; and, though it became wealthy and populous very speedily after its destruction by the Iceni, it was not defended. It consisted in fact of a fort commanding the bridge, and possibly connected with a similar fort at Southwark,* of a port, perhaps two ports, one at Billingsgate, and one at Dowgate; and of a vast ring of suburbs, surrounding the fort on the east, north, and west sides, and extending as far as Bishopsgate, Newgate, and even Westminster.†

Of the Roman buildings we can form an approximate idea. They were, no doubt, like Roman buildings elsewhere. Several castles or forts which answer very well

* It is by no means impossible that the principal Roman station was on the southern side. This would account for Ptolemy's placing London in Cantium.

† The remains of a Roman building, perhaps a villa, with a hypocaust, have been recently found in the nave of Westminster Abbey. They may date from the time when the chief road to Dover crossed the Thames here.

to the remains discovered in London are still standing in various parts of the world. Such a place as Richborough gives us a distinct view of the kind of fortress the Romans would make in London. Let us take for granted that London Stone marked the site of a gate in the western rampart, for, though it is no longer in its original place, it is not very far from it, and let us enter and walk up from the valley of the Wallbrook to the level ground above. We are now in an oblong walled space, extending along the brow of a line of low bluffs from what is now Dowgate Hill on the west to the place where a bend occurs in the line of Little and Great Tower Street.* I do not know that the bend is caused by this having been the site of a Roman bastion, but it is not improbable. At the south-western corner, overhanging Dowgate, was a great semicircular bastion, built of stone and thin tile-like bricks in alternate courses. It was so large that its foundations extended from what is now Scot's Yard, beside Cannon Street Station, to Laurence-Pountney Lane. Here the level ground approaches nearer the river, and the lanes which now lead down to Thames Street are shorter and steeper, though after the Great Fire they were altered and levelled to a considerable extent. The east and north sides of the fortress were defended by ditches full of water. Traces of the northern ditch remained for a thousand years or more in the neighbourhood of Lombard Street,† and were looked upon as forming the bed of a stream which ran into the Wallbrook according to

* Among projected improvements is one for the straightening of Tower Street.

† Stow says, "Langbourne Water, so called of the length thereof," rose in Fenchurch Street, crossed Gracechurch Street, and ran down "Lumbard Street." It was covered before his time, but some allusion to it may exist in the name of Sherborne Lane.

some, or by "divers rills or rillets to the river of Thames." There may have been a stream, but though the English called the ditch a bourne, and the ward through which it ran Langbourne, we can have little hesitation in thus identifying it, the more so, as the earliest form of the name is not Langbourne but Langford. The Langbourne ran from the north-eastern corner of the little city to the declivity of Wallbrook, all along the northern front, except where a thoroughfare parallel to that now called Gracechurch Street, but more eastward, and nearly on the site of Botolph Lane, crossed it, and went out north by what the English afterwards called the Eormen Way, towards Ancaster and Lincoln. The whole oblong space, therefore, was crossed by two great streets, the Watling Street from the west and north-west, and the Eormen or Ermyn Way from the north and north-east. The two met* at the bridge foot, and here, therefore, was the market place, still called East Cheap. There was possibly a small river postern at the spot now or lately marked by Ebbgate Lane, and probably a larger one opening on the bridge.

The walls which defended this Pretorium, as some have called it, were enormously strong, but have almost all gradually disappeared under the inexorable hand of modern improvement. Cannon Street Terminus destroyed the great south-western bastion. An immensely massive portion was laid open lately on the east side, in Mincing Lane, and not destroyed, only because destruction was too expensive. All kinds of Roman remains have been found within the walls. All, that is, except funeral relics. No interments were made within a Roman city, and we find none here. The moment we pass the limits marked

* A third road, the Vicinal Way, ran eastward from the northern gate towards Essex—but was hardly yet in existence.

above, the interments occur, some of them close under the wall, as at St. Dunstan's church, on the east, and in Lombard Street on the north.

Outside the fort on the west was the steep bank of the Wallbrook, and its mouth at Dowgate. The course of the stream was turned by the bastion mentioned above, and close to it, with probably some kind of bridge, was the chief gate opening on the Watling Street. Vestiges of rude buildings have been found on the opposite bank of the brook, which have led some writers to suppose that a native village, perhaps of Dowgate fishermen, stood on the height. Remains, too, have been found which would indicate the existence then or later of something like a place for boat-building.

Within the fort, close to the western wall, and therefore overlooking Dowgate, was a large hall or basilica with a tessellated pavement, perhaps the residence of the governor, or the court where justice was administered.* But with this exception we know of no great building within the walls, and though a bath has been found near the river-side, we may conclude, from the absence of an amphitheatre or any great temple, that up to the middle of the third century at least, the military force in London was not large, and probably was kept apart from the suburban population and within the fortifications. In the later wall fragments of buildings with architectural and artistic pretensions are sometimes found, such as capitals, broken friezes and portions of sculptural decorations. But the buildings to which they belonged were more probably outside the wall of the Roman castle.

The Roman part of the place was very small, but, up to the time when the great wall was built, London was a city of suburbs as it is to-day. The long peace of Roman

* Harrison, p. 7.

rule rendered it unnecessary for the ordinary townsman to live within fortifications. In this respect London differs and, as it appears, differed fifteen hundred years ago, from the cities of the Continent. The whole of the ground round the Roman fort was covered with houses, some great, magnificent, artificially warmed, frescoed and painted, and some also, no doubt, mere hovels. There were gardens, trees and orchards, and among them what was not to be seen in any other Roman town of the size, the tombs and monuments of the dead. The population was singularly careless in this respect, and the hand of the modern excavator sometimes* comes upon the mosaic floor of a Roman villa, with a portion of the later wall built across it, and a grave underneath it.

The banks of the Wallbrook were especially popular as sites for villas. All along its winding course, at a varying depth, we come upon evidences of the wealth and luxury of these old dwellers in the pleasant ravine beside Threadneedle Street, or the rounded summit of Cornhill by the great northern highway. It is here that the finest remains have been found, many of them covered with layers of black ashes which betray at once the fragile character of the wooden houses, and the constant occurrence of destructive fires.

The merchants came into the port from many foreign shores. The oysters of Britain, the iron, the tin and lead, and perhaps also the corn, were embarked at Billingsgate and Dowgate. The merchants built their one-storeyed houses round the castle, and have left us a few evidences of their wealth and taste.† We may

* As at Camomile Street a few years ago.

† See Mr. Roach Smith's Catalogue of his London Museum, and Sir William Tite's 'Antiquities exhibited at the Royal Exchange.' To the latter work, and other books and papers by the same author, I am chiefly indebted for this view of Roman London.

picture them to ourselves, as they assemble in the narrow lanes, aping Roman manners and wrapping themselves in Roman togas to hide the "braccæ" which the climate rendered necessary. We see the British maidens tripping down the steps by the Wallbrook, to fill great red jars of Kentish pottery, where now clerks hurry down from Threadneedle Street to Broad Street and never think why stairs are necessary between the two parallel rows of houses. We may visit the market-place, and where now the Sailor King's statue looks down on the crowd of omnibuses and drays, may see some foreign slave merchant, with cunning, swarthy face, as he haggles over the wretched gang of fair-skinned children from beyond the northern forests. We may perhaps stand by and see the Roman base coin counted out by the money-changers, and hear the frequent ring to test the genuineness of some plated "penny."* Or we may witness a dispute between a Gaulish merchant and a Frankish mercenary, and a riot may ensue, the guard be called out, and the ringleaders taken before the proprætor or the centurion. Perhaps he sends them on to York for trial, and writes with them such a letter as Claudius Lysias wrote to Felix.†

Such must have been Roman London during two-thirds, at least, of its existence. It is not the picture usually drawn;‡ for we are accustomed to talk as if Roman London was always the same, and to forget that it underwent many changes, and only acquired the walls which still, in a sense, survive, towards the end of the

* By far the larger portion of the denarii found in the Thames consist of lead and brass, plated with silver. (Roach Smith, p. 89.)

† Acts, xxiii. 26.

‡ This, which is the only chronological and therefore reasonable view, was first described by Mr. Arthur Taylor in the 'Archæologia,' xxxiii. 101.

Roman occupation of Britain. It was still an unwallled town when the next event of which we have documentary evidence occurred.

The story is a curious one, but it may be noted as characteristic of our city that the mention of a great fog is the means of removing the mist which, for nearly two centuries and a half, had enshrouded its history.

It was now near the close of the third century of the Christian era, and Diocletian, the Emperor of the Roman world, had just (A.D. 286) associated Maximian with him in the government. The two emperors were universally acknowledged except in Britain and Gaul, where Carausius had long been chief commander of a fleet for the suppression of German piracies in the Channel. He now declared himself, or was elected by his soldiers "Emperor." His insular residence was at Clausentum, now Bitterne, on Southampton Water, where a Roman stone pier still exists; but he was probably more often at his Gallic capital, Boulogne. He was very wealthy, as he had retained the booty taken from the pirates, and was popular with his soldiers in consequence. For seven years he maintained his power, and, feeling no doubt pretty sure the emperors would not acknowledge him, he took the matter into his own hands, and pretending to recognise Maximian as his colleague, struck a gold medal at London—perhaps the earliest coin minted there—on which the name of his rival appears, with an inscription which implies the simultaneous existence of three emperors.* We should know little indeed of his reign

* Obv.—MAXIMIANUS P. F. AUG. Laureated head of Maximianus to the right; rev. SALUS AUGGG. Personification of the goddess Salus standing, and feeding a serpent from a patera. In the exergue M.L., for MONETA LONDINENSIS. (Roach Smith, Catalogue, p. 86.)

were it not for the large amount of money he issued, much of it at London. This is the only thing to connect him with the place, which it is, however, evident that he held and used as a treasury.

At length the Cæsar, Constantius, sent by the two emperors, marched upon Boulogne and laid siege to it. Carausius fled away to Britain, where he might have remained long in comparative security ; but his prestige was gone when his cowardice became apparent, and he was murdered by Allectus, one of his officers, who assumed the purple, and for three years held sway in Britain while Constantius was occupied in reducing the rebellious Franks to obedience. The capital of Allectus was probably Clausentum. It was certainly not London, though he coined some money there.*

Allectus stationed his fleet off the Isle of Wight, and swept the Channel. He largely recruited his army from the Franks whom Constantius had driven out of Gaul, and a descent upon Britain in the teeth of such an armament was a work not to be lightly undertaken. But Constantius, though he went slowly about the business, went surely. He gradually assembled a fleet at Havre, and selected a trustworthy officer to command it. This was Asclepiodotus, of whom it is strange that we hear so little in subsequent history. News of the intended invasion reached Allectus, who probably thinking Clausentum sufficiently protected by his fleet, marched eastward, lest the troops of Asclepiodotus should land in Kent. London, or more probably Southwark, was evidently his base of operations : and his army, too large for

* 'The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon,' by T. Wright, p. 113, &c., a summary of almost all that is known of these emperors. In the following pages I have given my own version of the events so far as they relate to London.

the citadel, was encamped on some of the hills* on the south side of the Thames. The bridge, open behind him, and, in case of defeat, the possibility of retreating northward beyond the Thames, made his position very strong.

Asclepiodotus was ready in A.D. 296, and having assembled his galleys at Havre, and taken his troops on board, found his progress impeded by a fog and an east wind. But the conqueror of Britain must not be afraid of either the one or the other. Asclepiodotus set sail in the fog, thereby eluding the fleet of Allectus ; and using the side wind in a way few Romans had attempted before, he landed in the west, thereby eluding also the army of Allectus. The place of his landing is unknown, but the story reminds us of the landing of William of Orange in 1688, the more so as the result was similar. The Romans in Britain, whether colonists or Romanised natives, were probably very tired of the ten years' tyranny, first of Carausius and afterwards of Allectus ; for the island was of necessity cut off from the Continent by a blockade like that established by Buonaparte at a later date ; and the "citizens of Rome," living in Britain, missed the commerce and all the other benefits of their august position, and found themselves reduced to their pristine condition of mere islanders. We cannot doubt that Asclepiodotus, long expected, was warmly welcomed and his expedition forwarded towards London by the colonists of the west. But before he commenced his march, he burnt his galleys, and having thus both relieved a large number of men from guarding the fleet, and also cut off all chances of flight in case of defeat, he turned eastward, and was soon heard of in London as being on his way along the left or north bank of the Thames.

* There are traditions and reports of camps at Clapham and Vauxhall.

Allectus, thus taken in flank, or perhaps in rear,* hastily summoning his soldiers, some of whom may have been encamped as far out as Wimbledon, commenced to cross the Thames by the bridge at London. But it was a work of time and skill to march a large army through a narrow outwork, over a narrower bridge, through the very circumscribed walls of the fort of London, and out into the crowded suburbs by the only gate which opened upon the Watling Street. Whether from want of experience or panic, Allectus failed to accomplish the task.† He was met by Asclepiodotus with a superior force, defeated and slain. His mercenary Franks, who practically held the city already, some of them in all probability having not yet passed the bridge, commenced plundering and burning, with an idea of escaping across the sea with their booty ; but Asclepiodotus gave them no time, for he immediately marched into the intricate network of villas, orchards, and cemeteries which surrounded London, and killed the greater number of the marauders.

The citizens warmly welcomed Constantius when he came over, for the mercantile class in London desired peace, a strong government, and open communication with the Continent, all of them gifts which he brought with him. But he did not stay. The Picts and Scots were troublesome on the northern frontier ; he made his headquarters at York,‡ and we hear no more

* The facts on which this narrative is based are very meagre ; a long and careful consideration of the geographical as well as the documentary exigencies of the case has induced me to piece together what may be considered a reasonably connected account.

† Some of us may remember the duke of Wellington's opinion as to the difficulty of marching 20,000 men out of Hyde Park.

‡ It may be worth while to note that, though the wife, or concubine, of Constantine was possibly a British slave girl who attracted and retained

of London for half a century. When Constantine, his son, became emperor in 306, he was in Britain ; but his connection with London is only marked by the issue of coins bearing his name, and a London mint mark. There are also coins bearing the name of his mother, Helena, which have the syllable " Lon " in the mint mark.* They seem to point to the presence of the divorced wife of the late emperor in Britain, or may have been coined by her son merely in her honour. There is no proof that Helena ever set foot in our island. Coins of the emperor's wife, and of his two sons, Crispus and Constantine, are also found with the presumed London mint marks ; therefore it seems probable that, during the ascendancy of this family, London began to be looked upon with increasing favour. It is certain that, either under Constantine himself, or under one of his immediate successors, the outer wall was built.

Though the building of the Roman wall, which still in a sense defines the city boundaries, is an event in the history of London not second in importance even to its foundation, since it made a mere village and fort with a " tête du pont " into a great city and the capital of provincial Britain, yet we have no records by which an exact date can be assigned to it. All we know is that in 350 London had no wall : and in 369 the wall existed.†

his fancy during this expedition, the whole London legend of St. Helena and her father, " old king Cole " of Colchester, has about as much contemporary authority as the nursery rhyme about the " fiddlers three." Yet I saw it not long ago fully and gravely detailed in the history of a church in the city dedicated to the saint. Wright (p. 371) calls Helena the daughter-in-law of Constantine ; a very gratuitous assumption, but one which, so far as London evidence is concerned, may be correct. Gibbon makes her the daughter of a Nicomedian innkeeper and allows the marriage.

* Roach Smith, p. 97.

† These dates are arrived at by Sir William Tite (*Archæol.*, xxxvi. 203) by a comparison of two passages in Ammianus. It will be well

The new wall must have taken in an immense tract of what was until then open country, especially along the Watling Street, towards Cheap and Newgate. It transformed London into Augusta; and though the new name hardly appears on the page of history, and never without a reference to the older one, its existence proves the increase in estimation which was then accorded to the place. The object of this extensive circumvallation is not very clear. The population to be protected might very well have been crowded into a much smaller space. But at that time Roman houses were seldom more than one storey in height, and spread over a large space, especially as most of them were rather villas than town houses, and were, of course, surrounded by extensive gardens and pleasure grounds. Among the trees and flowers rose frequent terminal figures and occasional shrines of rude but costly workmanship, in which the successful merchant burnt incense before a precious bronze Mercury brought in his last cargo from Rome itself, or the idle man of pleasure set up an ill-sculptured effigy of Diana, in the hopes of obtaining by her favour good sport in the wooded hills of Middlesex.

The wall enclosed a space of 380 acres, being 5485 yards in length, or 3 miles and 205 yards.* The portion along the river extended from Blackfriars to the Tower—the Thames bank being strengthened with piles—and was finished by bastions and additional defences at the angles. Near the chief gates, and, per-

here to caution the reader against supposing that any remains of the Roman wall are now to be identified with certainty. The wall was rebuilt more than once in the middle ages, and the use of ancient material, such as brick, has led to the ascription of much mediæval work to the Romans.

* These figures are Harrison's. It is not now any longer possible to trace exactly the course of the Roman wall.

haps, at the Barbican on the long north face, there were similar bastions. The wall was built in the usual Roman manner, with alternate courses of thin bricks and stone.* There were two land gates and three water gates, as well as the gate to the bridge. Of the form and appearance of the wall and its towers we can only judge by the remains of similar buildings elsewhere. There have been so many renewals of the city defences that little of the original work, except the materials, is ever now to be seen. In one respect, however, the wall remains almost intact, namely, as the boundary between the city of London and the county of Middlesex. There have been only three serious alterations of this boundary. The ward of Farringdon Without, comprising Smithfield, Fleet Street, and the valley of the Fleet, then a marsh, was abstracted from Westminster and added to London in 1346. The ward of Bishopsgate Without was also added at a period not as yet fixed with certainty, but probably a hundred years earlier.† These changes are at the western and northern sides, and naturally followed from the growth of suburbs without the gates. The erection of a gate on the eastern side led similarly to the addition of Portsoken as a ward,‡ which took place early in the twelfth century. We must also notice another alteration. The south-eastern corner of the wall was removed, and the Tower of London was built on the

* Unfortunately few of the antiquaries who had an opportunity of examining the wall while any considerable part of it was intact were capable of distinguishing Roman from mediæval masonry. None of the fragments I have had the good fortune to see appeared to me older than the time of Edward IV., though full of Roman bricks.

† A ditch to enclose and defend this extramural ward was made in 1212.

‡ The history of Aldgate and the Portsoken will be found in a subsequent chapter. (See below, in this volume, p. 162, etc.)

site, between 1077 and 1199, a small portion of the city precincts being invaded.

The course of the wall may be briefly detailed. Beginning at Blackfriars, we may follow it in a northerly direction along the crest of the hill above the Fleet. A watergate, opening on the little river, was at Ludgate. The chief exit on this side was at Newgate, almost on the site of the mediæval gate. Here the Watling Street emerged from the city. The wall then took a north-easterly course, between St. Bartholomew's Hospital and Christ's Hospital, and, forming a kind of angle where Aldersgate was afterwards made, turned north for a short distance, and then east again to Bishopsgate, the second great land gate of the city. It stood a little to the east of the mediæval gate, and gave admission to travellers arriving from the north by the Ermyn Street, and from the east by the Vicinal Way, which united at this point. Thence sloping in a south-easterly direction, past the point at which Aldgate was opened in the later time, it reached the Thames exactly on the spot on which the White Tower now stands.* A little to the westward was Billingsgate, a port of superior importance to that on the Fleet, and still further west, above the bridge, the smaller port of Dowgate at the mouth of the Wallbrook.

The road from the bridge, dividing at Eastcheap, ran northward to Bishopsgate, and north-westward to Newgate. The northward street passed, in a line parallel with Gracechurch Street, but lying further east, over Cornhill, whose name possibly denotes its open condition when the Saxons came, and, dividing outside the gate, the left-hand branch ran on towards Lincoln and York,

* This must be the explanation of the common ascription of the Tower to the Romans.

the right branch over the Old Ford of the Lea into Essex. When a new bridge was made at Stratford, a little lower down the stream, or a little earlier, when the roadway to Stratford was paved, another entrance was made to the city at Aldgate; but this would be after the Roman time.*

The new city, which was still smaller than *Uriconium*, and probably *York* and *Verulam*, does not appear to have contained a single public building of importance. There was no forum, unless the supposed basilica within the citadel be considered part of one; there was no amphitheatre, no temple worthy of so great a city. Some remains were found under Bow church in Cheap by Sir Christopher Wren, and were decided to be those of a temple, on what grounds we have no means now of finding out. Sir Christopher discredited the idea of a temple of *Diana* on the site of *St. Paul's*:—"I must assert that, having changed all the foundations of old *St. Paul's*, and upon that occasion rummaged all the ground thereabouts, and being very desirous to find some footsteps of such a temple, I could not discover any." Had Sir Christopher Wren known that at the time this hill was first included within the walls of London, a Christian family was on the imperial throne, and that, although idolatry had not yet been expressly abolished, it was unlikely that any great heathen edifice would adorn the new city, he might have saved himself some trouble.† The absence of ornamental pavements

* See chap. vi.

† Yet it is reasserted without a particle of proof by the author of Murray's '*Handbook to St. Paul's*' (p. 6), chiefly on the grounds of the altar of a hunting goddess, or god, having been discovered in Foster Lane. A piece of sculpture is found near Goldsmiths' Hall: the figure on it held a bow; therefore there was a temple of *Diana* on the site of *St. Paul's*.—Q.E.D. Too much London history is of this sort.

so far west, or of the other signs of occupation so frequent about the Wallbrook, shows that, in all probability, the suburb here, if indeed there was a suburb, was inconsiderable ; for it is possible enough that, in order to take in the geographical features described in the last chapter, the ground surrounded by this new wall may at the time have been in many places absolutely open, while in others the sites of villas which extended beyond it were traversed by it. It is also just possible that such changes in the direction of its course as that by Aldersgate were caused by the desire to enclose a building or avoid a swamp ; but it is more likely that this angle contained a postern protected by a barbican.

The question is often asked as to whether any vestiges of Christian worship have been found within this area. There can be but one reply. Nothing to indicate the existence of a church, and only some doubtful indications of Christian burial, have yet rewarded the most careful search. A pin or two, ornamented with crosses, and a seal or stamp, dredged out of the Thames, are all that can possibly be classed as of the Roman period. The absurd claim lately put forward, with encouragement from very high quarters, on the part of St. Peter's-upon-Cornhill to represent a church founded in Roman or British times, would be too ridiculous to deserve notice here, were it not that a few years ago the parish, or some of its representatives, celebrated the 1700th anniversary of the foundation by a religious service. Such a celebration, though turned to a charitable object, looks like playing at religion, and is not calculated to further a love of truth and honesty among those for whom the Church is supposed especially to labour. There is certainly a very ancient tradition, and perhaps something more than a tradition, as to a Bishop of London ; and it is supported

by the recorded presence of a British bishop named Restitutus, sometimes said to have been Bishop of London, at the Council of Arles in 314.* It is remarkable that of the fourteen bishops mentioned by Jocelyn, a monkish chronicler of the twelfth century, as having succeeded each other in this see, not one is afterwards to be found as the patron saint of a London church.

I hoped at one time, by means of a classified list of the city church dedications, to have been enabled to arrive at some positive conclusions on the subject. In the result I only found that the presumably oldest churches, such as St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. Mary-le-bow, St. Stephen's, St. Andrew's, and others, were dedicated to the apostles and members of the primitive Church, and that there was not a single case in which any reminiscence, however faint, could be traced to a British saint. There are some churches, such as St. Helen's and St. Alban's, of which the history and origin are well known as comparatively recent, which are dedicated to saints supposed at the time of the dedication to belong to the ancient British Church. Moreover, among the dedications to the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles, there are many churches of which the origin is on record.† Yet, as the wall was built after the conversion of the West, Roman London—that is “Augusta,”—was always a Christian city, a fact which may be taken to account in some measure for absence of remains of temples.

* Mr. Stubbs (*‘Episcopal Succession in England,’* p. 152) also mentions a British bishop, Fastidius, as living in 431. He gives the apocryphal list of British bishops of London, beginning with Theonus or Theanus, who was said to have built the church of St. Peter in the time of Lucius, but adds a caution as to the “uncritical” state of the list, which, by the way, does not include Restitutus.

† I shall have occasion to return to this subject when speaking of the Saxon and Danish dedications. (See below, pp. 60 and 72.)

That no very magnificent city ever filled the space thus walled in is abundantly evident from the remains found. A more poverty-stricken exhibition cannot be imagined than the Roman museum at the Guildhall, yet it contains by far the finest collection in existence. From the mosaic pavements here and at the British Museum, we learn that in such arts as those of house decoration the Londoners were fairly advanced, but that the rooms they occupied were miserably small. There are few other works of art—gold there is none, and the statues and statuettes are for the most part fragments, of foreign make. A new room has been opened in the British Museum, where a small silver statue of Harpocrates is preserved, which was dredged out of the Thames in 1825; and a very good bronze of an archer. Another figure, said to represent Diana, was found near the Deanery, between St. Paul's and the river bank, and forms, with the altar mentioned above, the chief or only argument for the existence of a temple on the site now occupied by the church. London Stone, a cubic foot of oolite, protected in 1869 by an iron grating, is probably a Roman relic, and is typical of the mutilated and unshapely condition of almost all that has been discovered. The early condition of London, a fort surrounded by unprotected villas, is sufficient to account for this apparent poverty, while its later condition, fitting loosely within a wall too large for it, in a period of disaster and decay, renders absurd any very sanguine expectations of the future disclosure of more important remains.

I now resume the enumeration of the historical notices of Roman London. In 360, Lupicinus, the lieutenant of Julian, being despatched to Britain to repel an invasion of the northern barbarians, set sail from Boulogne, landed

at Richborough,* and marched to London, but of his further proceedings we know nothing. It is probable that even for the time his efforts were unsuccessful. The Picts and Scots were making daily progress, and in 368 were already in sight of the walls. They plundered the surrounding country, the forests affording them cover, and nothing but the new wall would have been able to resist them, but Valentinian sent an able general, named Theodosius, who, landing like Lupicinus, at Richborough, was able, finding the barbarians scattered about, to defeat them in detail, and relieve London. He restored the plunder to its owners, and was joyfully received by the citizens at their gates. This Theodosius was father of the emperor of the same name, who, dying in 395, was succeeded by the feeble Honorius, under whom the Roman occupation of Britain came to an end.

Of London at this crisis we hear nothing. That it enjoyed some years of comparative security and peace after the Romans withdrew is very likely, but the history of the time has yet to be written. Though it is pretty certain that to the end of the occupation a strong imperial force was constantly within its fortifications, we cannot even tell by which of the legions the troops of the *proprætor* were supplied.

I have thus endeavoured to piece together the few fragments, topographical or documentary, which relate to Roman London. The result is more shadowy than I wish. The historian cannot but shrink from seeing his pages abundantly sprinkled with such words as "possibly," "perhaps," "in all probability," and yet, when I come to look at the passages in which I have been minded to express myself with a fair measure of certainty, I regret to

* Or Rutupiaë, near Sandwich in Kent.

observe that in each case an alternative story may be, or has been put forward. If I have succeeded at all, it is only in showing how very little we know about the early history of the city. That it was ever the capital of Britain, as so many have asserted, can only be doubtfully proved regarding the short time which elapsed between the building of the wall and the withdrawal of the imperial troops. It was only named Augusta during the brief period which succeeded the re-organisation of the empire under Constantine and his family. The remains discovered tell us little in comparison with what we know of several other British towns. But we do know that far beneath the feet of the busy throng which presses every day the pavements of modern London, there lie buried the traces of an ancient city—a city which has well kept up the character accorded to it by Tacitus, and through whose streets there has been no cessation of that concourse of merchants, that crowd of foreign peoples, that activity and bustle which have made it, during nearly 2000 years, a thriving commercial city. A foreign poet spoke of it in the 17th century in words far more true now than they were then, when he said of London that it was,—

“Cunctas celebrata per oras,
Cor mundi, mundique oculus, mundique theatrum,
Annulus Europæ, præsignis adorea terræ.”*

* From ‘Venceslai Clementis à Lybeo-Monte Trinobantiados Augusta, sive Londoni: libri vi.’ The date is elaborately concealed in a chronogram, but appears to be 1636, and the poem is dedicated to Charles I. by “Autor, Christi exsul.”

CHAPTER III.

SAXON LONDON.

IT was necessary to conclude the last chapter by a reference to the insuperable difficulties presented by much of the history of Roman London. These difficulties are doubled when we approach the subject of Saxon London. We have to attempt the construction of a continued narrative from the most meagre facts. The Romans left Britain in 410.* The East Saxons are in London in 609. Of the intervening years, eventful as they were to the country at large, we have no records relating to London, except that after the fatal battle of Crayford, in 457, the fugitives of Kent took refuge within her walls.

All that can be done, therefore, by the historian is to place in chronological order the notices found in the most nearly contemporary documents—for of really contemporary documents there are none—and to mention such topographical facts as may seem to bear on the question of the first conquest of London by the Saxons.

From the year 369, then, when Ammianus Marcellinus tells us of the expedition of Theodosius, to the year 457, we have no mention of London. In the interval the Saxons were pouring over the land. We know that the great and terrible events which were to make Britain

* Green, 'Making of England,' p. 24.

To face p 50



Stanford's Geog¹ Estab¹



London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

into England, were happening all through the island. The half-Romanised cities were everywhere yielding to the heathen invader, and being destroyed deliberately and slowly, or else were resisting him, and being destroyed with fire and massacre. The great storm rages: the clouds hide all the landscape: the thunder roars: the lightning dazzles our sight: then a corner of the obscurity clears for a moment, and we see London standing alone in the midst of the tempest. "This year," says the Chronicle, grimly, "Hengest, and Æsc his son, fought against the Britons at the place which is called Cregan-ford, and there slew four thousand men; and the Britons then forsook Kent, and in great terror fled to London." We see the city surrounded by the invaders, and the hapless fugitives from the slaughter in the valley of the Cray crowding the gates. Then the cloud settles down again, and we see no more. Augusta has made her very last appearance on the stage of history. What went on within the Roman walls after that fatal year, 457, we know not. There is silence everywhere, and it lasts for a century and a half. In the passage from the Chronicle we are admitted to one glimpse of the awful drama: but the rest of the tale is untold. The dénouement must be guessed. The third volume is lost.

It is easy to talk lightly, but this is one of the most awful episodes in our history. What the hapless Britons must have suffered from their conquerors cannot be realised or described. That a great nation should have been so completely effaced, and in so short a time, is in itself a marvel. But that the conquest of Essex and Middlesex, and above all, of the great walled city of London, should have taken place without any historical notice whatever, is even more extraordinary. "No territory," remarks a great foreign historian, "ever passed so obscurely into

the possession of an enemy as the north bank of the Thames."*

When we next meet with London, she is the chief town of a Saxon kingdom. The invaders of Britain, as enumerated by the chronicler, were Old Saxons, Angles and Jutes. From the Old Saxons came, he says, the men of Essex and Sussex and Wessex. This is the first time we hear of Essex, namely in 449. Under the year 491, we have an account of the conquest of the Channel coast by the tribe afterwards known as the South Saxons. Under 495 we have the beginnings of Wessex. But of the East Saxons, the conquerors of London, we have no history. How their progress was crowned by the possession of the most important position in England, we do not know. We find them in full possession.† It is in 604. "This year," says the Chronicle, "Augustine hal- lowed two bishops, Mellitus and Justus. He sent Mellitus to preach baptism to the East Saxons, whose king was called Seberht, son of Rícula, the sister of Ethelbert, whom Ethelbert had there set as king. And Ethelbert gave to Mellitus a bishop's see at London, and to Justus he gave Rochester."

From this short passage we learn that in spite of the strength of London, the men of Kent were stronger than the East Saxons. The king of Kent appointed Seberht. Had the wall been broken down? This is very probable. It was no defence a few years later against the Danes and had to be rebuilt by Alfred. The Essex men made no attempt to resist Egbert in London in 827. In fact, there is negative evidence enough to make it a very strong presumption that London, while it was occupied

* Lappenberg, i. III.

† Turner says the settlement occurred about 530, basing the date evidently on Matthew of Westminster, who names 527.

by the East Saxons, was not a place of military importance. It was perhaps too large to defend. Its walls were perhaps unsuited to the Saxon system of warfare. Whatever be the cause, it is certain that the occupation of London was no source of strength to the Essex kings, who were alternately subdued by Kent and Mercia and Wessex, and finally subsided into mere local nobles.* London, in short, was rather a source of weakness than of strength; and it is worth while to inquire why. The answer which occurs to me is twofold. First, the walls had to be kept up. They were always getting out of repair. A single breach in so great a length ruined the value of all. Had the old Roman fort remained, their tenure of London might have had great results for the East Saxons. The costs and charges summed up under the old formula, "*burh-bote and bryc-geweorc*," must have fallen very heavily on the inhabitants. At a slightly later period we shall find that there were very valiant men among the citizens, and the exceptional discipline required for keeping their defences in working order may have contributed to increase their martial spirit. But at first, when they were few in number, these charges were a burden too great for them. And a second source of weakness to the East Saxons in the possession of London lay in the fact that other people were interested in it. There was the bridge which led into another kingdom. There was the port occupied by foreign merchants. The East Saxons would seem never to have had complete power, and if the king of Kent could appoint a bishop and could station his own officer, like a modern consul in

* A "*Sigred Dux*," who witnessed a charter in 810 is supposed to be identical with *Sigered*, king of Essex, who was present at a *Witan* "in the royal city of London," in 811. A *Sired* is recorded to have built a church at Aldgate before 1100. See also Appendix M.

an oriental port, to look after the commercial dealings of his subjects, it will be easily understood that the Essex kings had the trouble, the expense, the military duty to perform in London, and yet were themselves little the better.

We may incidentally gather a few other inferences from the Essex occupation. The Britons left in London must have been very few. With the single and doubtful exception of Dow-gate—the first syllable of which may be Celtic, none of the local names survived. The Saxons re-named everything. The great streets became, whatever they may have been before, Watling Street and Cornhill, and the Ermyrn Street. The market-places became East and West Cheap. The western and eastern ports became Lud-gate and Billings-gate. In England many rivers retain Celtic names, like the Thames itself. But in London we have the Hole-bourne, the Fleet, the Wallbrook, the Lea.* When we examine the direction of the Roman remains, the facing, for example, of a villa, as shown by its pavement, we do not find it coincide with the direction of the modern streets. The great northern road entered the Roman wall considerably to the east of the mediæval Bishopsgate. The Watling Street led to a gate which was by no means on the exact site of Newgate. In short, there are evidences, rather negative, it is true, than positive, to show that the East Saxons found London desolate, with broken walls,† and a scanty population, if any; that they entered on possession with no great feeling of exultation, after no great military feat deserving mention in their Chronicle; and that they retained it only just so long as the more powerful neigh-

* The Lea may bear a Celtic name analogous to the modern French *eau*.

† "Good reasons may be given for the belief that even London itself for a while lay desolate and uninhabited."—Guest, 'Arch. Journ.,' xix. 217.

bouring kings allowed them. This view is the only one which seems to me to account for the few facts we have. That there was no great or violent conquest seems clear from the continued existence of the bridge, and from the continued concourse of foreign merchants; and it is very possible that these foreign merchants occupied a small habitable area in a vast wilderness of abandoned villas and open fields. I have already endeavoured to show that, until the last few years of the Roman occupation, London cannot have been very populous. The wall included many large empty spaces. When the city became Augusta, and was dignified with the presence of great Roman officials and a Roman army, it became populous enough. But if we subtract the army and the officials, and also the "concourse of foreign merchants," who in time of war would retire to their own lands, there may not have been much left; and the Britons, defeated at Crayford, and so closely pressed that they did not even destroy the bridge after them, very possibly stayed but a short time in London, which the successors of Hengest left peaceably to their East Saxon neighbours—a possession of no value to people who did not fight from behind walls. In Anderida and Richborough and Canterbury, we see the same low value placed on Roman defences. Anderida and Richborough were not even occupied as forts. The Britons had lost the art of using walled cities, the Saxons had not acquired it. London was equally useless to both.

The written history of London at this period is the history of the Church. It is to be feared that the Londoners did not take kindly to the change of religion. To their independent minds it must have seemed a sign of servitude. Ethelbert had seen Gospel light in a woman's eyes, and were they to give up their gods, and

undergo a rite which made every British slave on their farms their equal in the sight of religion? Were not their princes, the family of Erkenwine, Offa's son, descended from Woden, the great god of the north? Yet, Ethelbert not only ordered them to abandon the worship of the divinities who had brought them safely from over the sea, and given the Welsh of London into their hands, but imposed on them a bishop, and built for him a cathedral. Beda, who fully ranks with the Chronicle as an early and trustworthy authority, tells us that Ethelbert had command over all nations of the English as far as the Humber, and that he built the church of St. Paul in London, where Mellitus and his successors should have the Episcopal See.

Of London itself, at this time, Beda tells us something. It was, he says, the "metropolis" of the East Saxons, who were divided from Kent by the river Thames. The word "metropolis" has of late years been so often applied to London that it is interesting to note its first use. Beda, no doubt, in this instance, refers to the ecclesiastical position of the place, with its bishop and its church; but in this connection his words have a larger meaning, and leave no doubt on the mind that Seberht, in his official capacity as king of Essex, had his headquarters in London; just as Mellitus, in his official capacity as bishop of London, had the regions peopled by the East Saxons for his diocese.

Seberht reigned more than twelve years after his conversion before he "departed to the heavenly kingdom," as Beda quaintly says. After his death the mission of Mellitus failed. Without his support, and that of Ethelbert, for both were now dead, the bishop found his teaching vain. The son of Ethelbert had outraged the laws of the church of Canterbury. His cousins, the three

sons of Seberht, went further; they openly relapsed, and, worse than all, in the eyes of the chroniclers, they gave the people leave to believe what they chose. The bishop and his church had no sanctity in their eyes. They saw in the sacrifice of the mass a kind of fetish—a ceremony which impressed their imagination and worked on their superstitious fears; and they tried to force Mellitus to communicate with them, though they were unbaptised. On his refusal they turned him out of London.

Beda is not slow to add the appropriate moral, and in so doing gives us a valuable little historical note. The kings, he says, did not long continue unpunished in their heathenish worship; for, marching to battle against the men of Wessex, they were all slain with their army.

Unfortunately, it is impossible not to suspect that here Beda has constructed history on the principle of “after, therefore, because,” since the Chronicle, which says nothing about the sons of Seberht, tells us only that, in 616, Ethelbert, king of Kent, and Laurence, archbishop of Canterbury, died, and that Mellitus, “who formerly had been bishop of London, succeeded to the archbishopric. Then,” it continues, “the men of London, where Mellitus had formerly been, became heathens again.” This ambiguous passage, taken literally, says therefore, that Mellitus had ceased to be bishop in London before he became archbishop; but that the relapse of the East Saxons did not take place till after he became archbishop. Though this is the literal meaning of the words, I think it would be straining them not to allow for a certain awkwardness of construction which would leave it possible that Beda’s account, and that of the Chronicle, are mainly in accordance.

This battle with the men of Wessex is, after all, the important part of the story. The West Saxons apparently did not possess themselves of London.* Eventually—but not for two hundred years—Wessex was to be paramount in London; but here we only find the succession of Essex kings unbroken, and the notices of their chief city more and more unfrequent. We have seen them subject to Kent and subdued by Wessex, and when we next hear of London, it is fifty years later, and they are then subject to Northumbria. Oswy, king of Northumbria, converted—we know not by what means,—Sigebert, king of Essex. It does not appear quite clearly that this Sigebert had possession of London, for when Cedd, the brother of St. Chad, came at his request to preach to the heathen of Essex, he took up his headquarters several miles further down the river—at Tilbury. Here, in any case, he soon gathered a congregation, and eventually succeeded in converting the whole population. In 654 Cedd was consecrated at Lindisfarne, by Finan and two other bishops, as bishop of London.† Of the ten years of his episcopate, we only know that when they closed London was no longer in the power of Northumbria, but in that of Mercia, since Beda tells us of Wina, a West Saxon bishop, that, being expelled from Winchester, he took refuge in Mercia, and, on the death of Cedd, purchased with money from king Wulfhere the bishopric of London.

Under such unfavourable circumstances was London Christianised. It is not surprising to find, a little later, that one of the kings of Essex—for there were usually two, reigning as colleagues,—and all his people seceded,

* What they did with their victory may be found in Mr. Green's *Making of England*.

† Stubbs, *'Episcopal Succession,'* p. 2.

during a terrible plague, from the church of Wina, and returned a second time to Woden and Thor. Once more Mercia interferes ; and though we have good ground for concluding that it was not the Londoners who had turned apostate, we cannot separate them from Essex, and have other grounds for believing that Mercia was at this time still in possession of the city,* though it yielded to Wessex in or before 693. Jarumnan, bishop of Lichfield, the bishop, that is, of the Mercians, converted them a second time ; and, if we may believe the saintly legends of later time, Osyth, the daughter of the king of Surrey and wife of the recalcitrant Sighere, took an active part in furthering these missionary efforts.†

The other king of Essex at this time was Sebbi, who was neither brother nor uncle, but probably cousin, of Sighere. Sebbi's name is interesting to the Londoner. A charter,‡ witnessed by him, by his cousin the second king, and by the saintly Erkenwald, bishop of London, is still extant§ in the British Museum. It relates to the grant of some land by one of the royal family, Othilred namely, to Barking Abbey. Sebbi signs himself "Ego Sebbi, Rex East Sax." Under his cross is that of his colleague Sighere, who is simply described as "Rex." This is the earliest East Saxon document of the kind now extant.

We thus see Christianity finally established in London. The scandal which Wina may have caused by an irregular or simoniacal election was speedily forgotten under the great Erkenwald. The Church took root ; and already,

* Green, 'Making of England,' p. 386.

† See Life of St. Osyth, in Mr. Baring Gould's 'Lives of the Saints.' I am sorry to say it will not square with any possible arrangement of known facts.

‡ 'Codex Dipl.,' vol. i., No. 35.

§ Cott. MSS. Aug. 2, 29.

in searching into the beginnings of London history, we catch sight here and there of the name of a Saxon saint, or have something better than tradition on which to found a local name. The northern entrance of the city had fallen into decay. The walls, as I have ventured to suppose, were ruinous. Bishop Erkenwald,* who seems to have been a kind of civil authority as well as a bishop, endeavoured to commence their reparation. To this end, he built the gate ever since called, after him, Bishops-gate.† Nothing can better show the decay of Roman roads and Roman gates than the fact that, though Bishops-gate Street leads from the bridge to the great northern road, the old line was not preserved. The Saxon gate was placed considerably to the west of the older one; and the roadway itself wound more or less and deviated from the straightness which its original constructors had loved.

There is no church of St. Erkenwald;‡ but two saints, of whom one may have been his contemporary, as the other certainly was, are among the earliest dedications in London. I pass by the St. Matthews, St. Peters, and St. Michaels, of which there are so many, and the St. Maries, of which in the city alone there are a round dozen at least, because, except in a few cases, it is impossible to fasten any date to the name. But if we look down a list of London parishes, the names of St. Ethelburga and St. Osyth will catch the eye. Both, according to saintly legend, were daughters of kings, and both, we may

* Erkenwald is spoken of by Ine, king of the West Saxons, as "my bishop." London had therefore passed from Mercia to Wessex before 693.

† This is tradition, but tradition of a kind which it would be absurd to reject, yet it may be called after St. Botolph.

‡ It was not till our own day that another Erkenwald or Archibald held the see of London.

suppose, were concerned in the conversion of the benighted East Saxons. Ethelburga, the niece of Ricula, whose husband, King Seberht, was the first Christian king of Essex, was herself the daughter of Ethelbert of Kent and his French wife, Bertha. Her church in London stands close to the bishop's new gate. The connection may be accidental, but there is nothing improbable in the idea that the lady Ethelburga lived through the troubles brought upon the see by the weakness of bishop Mellitus and the wickedness of her cousins, the sons of Seberht; nor can it be wrong to suggest as probable that her memory, after the night of trouble was overpast, would be cherished when the religion she had loved became once more the faith of the people. Be this as it may, the church of St. Ethelburga, whose fabric is probably the oldest of all now remaining in London, was built hard by the gate of the bishop.

Among the open spaces within the wall when the Saxons came was the West Cheap, a market-place of which I shall have more to say. In a network of narrow lanes on the south side of this place, and on the west bank of the Wallbrook, formerly stood the church of St. Osyth. In later times, the saint was only remembered by the name of the street; for, the church having been "restored" or rebuilt before the end of the thirteenth century was probably rededicated, and became St. Bennet Sherehog in "Size Lane."* It was burnt in the Great Fire, and never rebuilt.

To this period, also, belongs another great name. St. Botolph is commemorated by four churches, which call for notice. He was the special saint of East Anglia. To him in particular every wayfarer going north from London Bridge would commend himself. He died in

* Riley, p. xix. His derivation of "Schorhog" is unsatisfactory.

the highest reputation for sanctity, at "Botolphston," or Boston, during the time Erkenwald was bishop of London; and we find among the most ancient dedications one church at the foot of the hill leading to old London Bridge, and another without the Bishopsgate, at the very first step upon the Ermyrn Street. When Aldersgate was built to relieve the traffic through what until then was the only northern gate, a third church of St. Botolph was built; so that the traveller should lose no blessing on his journey by patronising the alternative route. When Aldgate was opened, probably late in the eleventh century, a fourth St. Botolph's church was erected on the new road into Essex. Botolph's Lane still marks the line of the first road from the bridge, and Botolph's Wharf is on the site of the bridge foot.

St. Osyth,* if we may believe the legend, was mother of Offa, a royal youth of "most lovely age and beauty," of whose history Beda has left us some particulars. He deserted "wife, lands, kindred and country," and going to Rome in the company of his overlord, Coinred, king of Mercia, he became a monk. That he had actually reigned as king, a point omitted by Beda, is proved by the existence of charters granted or signed by him,† but so little was he remembered even a few years after his time, that early copies of these documents describe him as king of Mercia. He evidently left no children, as Beda does not mention them,

* Her festival is 7th October, and she is described as "Queen and Martyr." Stow passes the church over in a single line, in which he confounds this saint with her namesake "the virgin."

† In the introduction to the 'Codex Diplomaticus,' p. xxv., Mr. Kemble detailed the arguments which enabled him to replace Offa in the list of East Saxon kings. He prints a copy of a charter in which Offa is confounded with his great namesake of Mercia. In it some land is given to the church at Worcester. Offa of Essex was probably little more than a superior kind of nobleman at the Mercian court.

and as he was succeeded in the empty royalty of Essex by a cousin, Selred, of whom we only know that he was killed in 746.

After this time there is no further connection to be traced between London and the kings of Essex. By insensible degrees, the kings of Mercia, who perceived the importance of the place, held it and kept it; and in a charter of Ethelbald, whose reign was prolonged from 718 to 757, we have special mention of the port and shipping, being, in fact, the first notice of London in any contemporary document now extant. It is in the British Museum.* Ethelbald grants to the bishop of Rochester leave for a ship, whether of his own or of another, to pass without tax into the port of London—(*in portu Lundoniæ*)—and speaks of the tax on shipping as his royal right, and that of his predecessors. This grant was made in 734. A little later the same king, in a charter written in Anglo-Saxon, makes mention of “Ludentune’s hythe,” another allusion to the importance of the port.† The great Offa of Mercia may have recovered it in 775,‡ but among the multitude of his charters he has left no mention of London,§ though later tradition says he had a palace there. When we come to Coenulf, his successor, however, we have one phrase of the highest value. Coenulf speaks of a Witan, or national council, held in

* Cott. MSS. Chart. xvii. i. ‘Cod. Dipl.’ No. 78. This manuscript should be exhibited in a table case with the others of public interest. There is in Kemble a charter of Erkenwald (No. 38) which is a copy or a forgery: in it there is a mention of land “supra vico Lundoniæ.” The copy is very ancient.

† Kemble, No. 95. Mr. Kemble printed several other charters, all more or less doubtful, in which London is mentioned before the close of the eighth century, e. g. Nos. 97, 98, 106, and 159. See below, Appendix M.

‡ Green, 418. As to Offa’s palace, said to have been in Wood Street on the site of St. Alban’s Church, see Maitland, ii. 1051.

§ Except in No. 159, which is of more than doubtful authenticity.

London in 811. He calls it "the illustrious place and royal city" (*loco preclaro oppidoque regali*), a description which, if "oppidum" is used in its strict sense, would imply that the Mercians set store by the fortifications. Among the signatures is that of a king of Essex.

London may be said after this time to be no longer the capital of one Saxon kingdom, but to be the special property of whichever king of whichever kingdom was then paramount in all England. When the supremacy of Mercia declined, and that of Wessex arose, London went to the conqueror. In 823, Egbert receives the submission of Essex, and in 827 he is in London, and in 833 a Witan is held there, at which he presides.

Such are the scanty notes from which the history of London during the so-called Heptarchy, must be compiled. The Witan of 833 met to deliberate on a question which, in its further developments, became one of the highest importance to the city.

Already, while the newly acquired power of Wessex was still in its infancy, a cloud of terrible disaster hung over the land. Nothing, as the event proved, could have been more fortunate for the dynasty of Egbert than the necessity which now arose that England should be under the rule of one strong hand. The Saxon's hour of retribution had come. What his heathen forefathers had inflicted on the Britons, the Danes were about to inflict on him; but the English were made of sterner stuff than the Welsh, and in time the struggle, having united England and welded her into a single kingdom with identical interests and aims, came to an end.

London had to bear the brunt of the attack at first. Her walls wholly failed to protect her. Time after time the freebooters broke in. If the Saxons had spared anything of Roman London, it must have disappeared now.

Massacre, slavery, and fire became familiar in her streets. At last the Danes seemed to have looked on her as their headquarters, and when, in 872, Alfred was forced to make truce with them, they actually retired to London as to their own city, to recruit.*

To Alfred, with his military experience and political sagacity, the possession of London was a necessity ; but he had to wait long before he obtained it. His preparations were complete in 884. The story of the conflict is the story of his life. His first great success was the capture of London after a short siege : to hold it was the task of all his later years. He probably found the Roman defences useless. The repairs effected by the Danes must have been of a very temporary character, and did not include any systematic restoration of the wall. Alfred knew the value of fortifications against savages, and his first care was to renew what was left of the Roman work. To his age we may probably attribute the building of two new gates, if not three. Cripplegate was never anything but a kind of enlarged postern, and did not open on any important road, though it was nearest to an outwork known as the Barbican. Aldersgate was of more importance, as being nearer the Watling Street, while communicating eastward with the Ermyrn Street at Bishopsgate. Moorgate† does not appear to have yet existed, although a small entrance close to the Wallbrook may have survived from Roman times. But we really know very little of the extent and details of Alfred's work. What we do know is that he

* They first took London in 839, and next in 851 or 852. In 852 the battle of Aclea (probably Oakley, on the Stone Street in Surrey) was fought, after which the Danes were quieted for a time.

† It is not mentioned in the list of gates as late as 1356. (Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 291.)

was successful. The Danes never again took the city by siege.

Alfred appointed to the government of his new stronghold, Ethelred, the Alderman, his son-in-law. Whether "the Lady of the Mercians" was with her husband in London, we know not. But he signalised his government by a brilliant feat of arms, one worthy of Alfred himself. The Danes, within a few years of their retirement from London, had assembled again in great strength at the mouth of the Thames. Ascending as far as "Beamfleote," now South Benfleet, in Essex, where a considerable tidal estuary or lagoon existed, stretching far up among the woods to the foot of the Laindon hills,* they formed a kind of fortified harbour from which they were able to plunder the country and to stop the traffic of the river. The Londoners under Ethelred sallied out, defeated them, and drove them back on their stronghold, which was besieged and taken, together with the wife and sons of Hastings, the Danish leader. But the Danes were only spurred to greater exertions; and assembling at once with fresh reinforcements after their defeat at Benfleet, they determined to attack London itself. Taking a large flotilla of galleys up the Lea to a stronghold in the forest about Ware, or possibly Hertford, they prepared to spend the winter in recruiting, with a view to the final capture of the city in the spring. But Alfred came himself upon the scene at this precarious moment, and by one of those combinations of strategy and daring so characteristic of him, he contrived to divert the waters of the Lea into three channels;† so that the Danish ships were left high and dry inland, and the Danes themselves

* It is impossible not to connect the almost certainly Celtic name Laindon, with the similar name of a very similarly situated hill, London.

† This story rests on very insecure foundations.

were pent in where their only chance of escape consisted in a disastrous flight across an enemy's territory.

This story is perhaps too circumstantial to bear the stamp of truth, yet it is old enough to show that operations of considerable magnitude in the war were carried on near London, when the Londoners performed "prodigies of valour," according to the boasts of their descendants. They certainly figure in the warlike annals of the time. There were Londoners with Athelstan at Brunanburgh; and when all England was overrun and wasted with fire and sword, they, at least, kept their own city intact. The surrounding counties, Middlesex, Essex, Kent, Sussex, even Hampshire and its royal city, were entirely in the hands of the enemy, while London held out. At the same time she increased in wealth. Security such as she could offer naturally attracted property, and we find Athelstan, when he established his mints, assigning eight coiners to London and seven to Canterbury; from which we may infer that these were the two centres of commercial life. At a later date, there are many references to this good time of old; and the number of foreigners in London when the Conqueror came shows that the concourse of merchants still existed in spite of the Danes. During the century and a half which elapsed between the death of Alfred and the peaceful time of King Edward, London Wick, and London Hithe, and London Street were crowded whenever London Bridge* was open. Mercantile transactions were carried on under difficulties, no doubt, when merchant adventurers had to run the gauntlet of the Danish pirates if they travelled by river, and of Danish brigands if they travelled by land. Yet the merchants prospered, and as early as the

* "The first historical proof of the existence of a bridge is in Eadgar's day, when a witch was drowned there." Green, 'Conquest,' ch. ix.

reign of Athelstan we find a "frith-gild" in existence. Guilds, as we shall see further on, had a powerful influence on London history ; but as yet the association, though recognised by the higher powers, was merely a friendly society which met once a month for "butt-filling," drank their beer, subscribed fourpence to a kind of insurance, ordered masses for the souls of brethren deceased since the last meeting, and paid for the detection and prosecution of thieves who had robbed any member of the guild. Finally, the remains of the feast were distributed in alms. Notwithstanding the butt-filling and feasting, this appears to have been a purely religious and social guild ; and though it may have subsequently become a power in the city, so far it is only of importance as the first evidence of combination among the inhabitants of London for anything like corporate action.*

The weak Ethelred, of whose kingdom London and Canterbury seem at one time to have been the only remnants, did nothing for London but take refuge within her walls ; and it is rather to the credit of the citizens than of the king that we must put the victorious expedition of 992. The treason and desertion of Aelfric, the bravery of Thorod, the presence of two bishops on board the ships, and many other circumstantial particulars, are narrated by the chroniclers ; all that is certain being, that the river traffic was opened for the merchants, and that a flank attack on the returning Londoners was signally defeated. The paltry spirit of the king, who on the one hand taxed his people for the disgraceful payment of Danegeld, and on the other encouraged

* See 'English Gilds,' by Toulmin Smith, and the 'History and Development of Gilds,' by Lujo Brentano ; also Stubbs's 'Constitutional History,' vol. i. *passim*. For the whole text containing the rules of the frith-gild, see appendix to Kemble's 'Saxons in England,' ii. 521.

them to the cowardly massacre of 1001, greatly increased the difficulties of the city, which had, as usual, to bear the brunt of Danish vengeance. Sweyn burned to exact punishment for the murder of his sister. Twice he essayed to subdue London, within whose walls Ethelred had, as usual, sought safety ; and whether he might have succeeded the first time or not we cannot tell, for Ethelred bought him off with an enormous ransom*—bought him off, that is, only for a time, while his forces were being renewed for a supreme effort. In 1012 he took Canterbury, and carrying Alphege, the archbishop, to Greenwich, he killed him there almost in sight of the terrified citizens. The following year he returned, and having been resisted by London alone, he prepared to besiege the city ; but Ethelred did not await his onset, and having no longer a king to defend, the citizens opened the gates and admitted the Danes.

London luxuries, however, or London fogs did not agree with Sweyn, who died suddenly at Gainsborough, after one winter in his new capital, and then the weary contest began again. The miserable Ethelred returned and reigned till 1016, when he died in peace at a good old age, and was buried in St. Paul's. His grave must have been among ruins or within newly rising walls, for the old church, the church of Cedd and Sebbi, if not of Mellitus and Seberht, had been burnt a few years before. The most tangible relic of the Danish occupation was found, in 1852, close to the site.† It bears the only Runic inscription yet identified in London : " Kina caused this stone to be laid over

* Said to have been 48,000*l*.

† In digging the foundation of Mr. Cook's great warehouse on the south side of St. Paul's Churchyard. The upper part is very handsomely carved with a grotesque figure. There is a description and woodcut in 'Archæological Journal,' x. 82.

Tuki." When Kina gave Tuki, his brother in arms, Christian burial in St. Paul's Churchyard, the war between the Saxons and Danes had entered a new phase. We hear of no massacre under Sweyn, of no burning or plundering. London was too rich to be injured, too precious to the king to be abandoned to the soldiers. She had many foreigners within her walls, perhaps many Northmen, Danish or otherwise. The contest was henceforth between two royal families for the crown of England, and the royal road ran through London.

The election and coronation of Edmund Ironside took place in London, and soon afterwards commenced the most memorable, because the last, regular siege of London. Canute disputed Edmund's right, and the king, notwithstanding his tried bravery, showed a want of military caution in leaving the protection of the city walls. Alfred had set store by them; they had been a kingdom to Ethelred; and when Edmund went into Wessex his cause was lost. Canute's siege affords one incident of remarkable interest. His canal* round London Bridge has been vaunted as the crowning feat of Danish strategy, while its failure has covered the Londoners with glory. In truth, however, neither was the canal a very wonderful work, nor was its success very likely. In my opening chapter I endeavoured to describe the original aspect of the country south of Southwark. Since the time of the Romans, no doubt, the muddy archipelago had become less moist, and was now only submerged at very high tides; while banks and drains

* Many writers have been at the pains of tracing Canute's canal. The whole subject is discussed by Maitland, Allen, Harrison, and others. I have gone carefully over the ground, and I have also endeavoured to read the various theories impartially. The result only, without further references, will be found in the text.

everywhere conducted the surplus water back into the Thames. A considerable stream, winding among the green aits of Bermondsey, ran out in Rotherhithe, where now St. Saviour's Dock is marked upon the maps. Another bore a high-sounding name in the local tradition of the last century, and flowed, as the Tigris, into the Thames above Southwark. In short, the difficulty of identifying Canute's canal is caused by the multitude of competitors for the honour. But at that day, the question of transporting a fleet of flat-bottomed galleys from Redriff to Lambeth depended on the force of men available, the depth of the channels, the height of the tide, and the distance from the threatening walls of Southwark. Here and there a roadway or an embankment had to be cut through. Here and there the black peat had to be strengthened in a watercourse. Some of the chroniclers speak clearly of the dragging of the ships. The work was soon done, but London did not surrender, and Canute, threatened from the west by Edmund, made a feint of retreating. His sudden return and attack did not surprise the citizens, and to the treason of Edric of Mercia, as much as to any result attained by fighting, must be attributed the position of Canute in his final treaty of partition.*

At last London was his, but peaceably,† and he held it and treated it peaceably. It is asserted that on this occasion the Londoners presented Canute with the enormous sum of 10,500*l.*,‡ and that 72,000*l.* was raised in all England; and we need not refuse to believe that the citizens paid heavily for their privileges, and secured

* Canute seems, for some reason, to have also made a ditch round the north side of the city.—*Florence of Worcester*, ed. Thorpe, vol. i. p. 173.

† A.D. 1017.

‡ Equal to about a quarter of a million in modern money.

freedom from molestation at the highest price Canute could exact.

We find many traces of the Danes of this period in London. Olaf came over as Thor and Woden had come before. We disguise his name in Tooley Street, at the southern end of London Bridge; but there are or were churches of St. Olave in Hart Street, and in the Old Jewry, in the city, while St. Magnus, in Thames Street, looks across the river at his compatriot. Of St. Clement Danes and St. Bride's it is not so easy to judge. The first, when it was founded, stood far out in the green fields of the Strand, on a hillock almost surrounded by water; and the legend of a special Danish settlement may or may not be true. The objection to it that it was unlikely such a formidable colony should be placed half-way between London and Westminster is easily disposed of when we remember that there was no road through it, either east or west, at the time, and that access to the church must have been from the north. The road from London to Westminster ran through Holborn. St. Bride's cannot be attributed to the time of Canute. The ground on which it stands was then under water.*

Under the orderly government of Canute some beginnings of municipal organisation show themselves. Money lies at the root of civic institutions. When Dane-geld had to be assessed, when, under a sudden demand, resistance was to be offered, when walls had to be built and ships fitted out, it is clear some power existed which could conduct or control the citizens. That it had a purely mercantile origin, and may, therefore, have included many foreigners, may be inferred from the first mention of a body representative of the wishes of Lon-

* Both St. Bride's and St. Clement's, as well as St. Dunstan's, were at first only chapels or district churches to Westminster. See chapter xvii.

doners. When Canute died the magnates of the realm assembled in "parliament" at Oxford, and there came up among them the "lithsmen" of London.* These were the traders who, going abroad or coming from abroad with their merchandise, were travellers by pre-eminence, and not only the owners, but, during the long peace of Canute's reign, the creators of the city wealth.

This witan chose Harold, who died three years later; and a similar assembly invited Queen Emma and her son Harthacnut, or Hardecnut as he is called in his charters, to come over from Bruges. Hardecnut, who stood in the unusual position of having two half-brothers—one on the father's and one on the mother's side,—and who succeeded one of them, and was succeeded by the other, chiefly signalised his reign by digging up the body of Harold, and throwing it into the river. It was found by fishermen—so runs the story,—and, being handed over to the Danish colony, was re-buried in St. Clement's. Hardecnut speedily drank himself to death, and Edward, called the Confessor, stepped into his place.

Edward's history connects him rather with Westminster than with London. In 1047, however, a council sat in London, at which, while nine ships were sent out to protect the Channel, no fewer than five were retained for the defence of the port of London. In the rebellion, or "pronunciamento" of Godwin, London figures to some extent, since the earl held Southwark for a time, and

* A. S. Chron., 1036. Lithan is *to navigate*. Norton (pp. 23, 24) goes into some elaborate arguments on this passage, to show that the merchants were thanes rather than mere burgesses. There is really no proof either way. The word may mean sailors and may mean merchants, or rather "commercial travellers." In the East to this day, a foreign traveller is called Khawaga, that is, literally, bagman. That any one should travel for pleasure was till lately incredible, and we still pray for travellers as for those afflicted.

passing the bridge with his ships overawed the king in the abbey-palace at Westminster.

We have some further notices of the beginnings of municipal institutions in this reign. Edward directs his writ * to London, to William, the bishop, and to Swetman, the portreeve, and another time to Leofstan and Ælsi, the portreeves. A little later Esgar † the "staller," or marshal, and Ulph, are the chief officers of the city. At a much later date, in the reign, namely, of Henry I., we hear of Leofstan again. He is mentioned as head of the old Knighten Guild, which was turned into the priory of Holy Trinity. Two sons of his also figured in connection with guilds. One, Robert, pays, in 1130, 16*l.* into the exchequer for the guild of weavers; and in the reign of Henry II. the other, Witso, gives half a mark of gold for his father's office. Unfortunately we do not know what office is intended.‡ One thing is certain, London was not included in any earldom.

Esgar, or Ansgar, the Staller, was at Hastings, and was wounded, but was able to retreat with his men upon London. "His wound was so severe that he could neither walk nor ride, but was carried about the city in a litter."§ Edgar Atheling was chosen as king, but was never crowned. Esgar must soon have seen the hopelessness of the struggle. William came to the bank and burnt Southwark, then marched away to the west, crossed the Thames at Wallingford, and marched north-east to Berkhamstead. He betrayed no symptoms of hurry. The city was gradually but surely being surrounded. A story has been told of a secret embassy from Esgar to

* 'Cod. Diplo.,' Nos. 856, 857, 861.

† There is little or no difficulty in the identification of Esgar and Ansgar.

‡ See Stubbs, 'Const. Hist.,' i. 406.

§ Freeman, 'Norman Conquest,' iii. 545.

Berkhampstead, and of private negotiations between the conqueror and a party in the city. There is no necessity for such a legend. The submission of London was open and straightforward. The young Edgar Atheling was among the messengers. He had never been crowned, and was only a titular king. William received him well, and saluted the chief men of London, as he says himself, "friendly." After some delay, caused by a real or feigned hesitation, he accepted the proffered crown, and appointed Christmas for his coronation at Westminster. He was not the last king the Londoners elected; but his election by them is an event not to be lightly passed over.* Under the long succession of English kings, during the long Danish wars, the side of the city had been the side of the conqueror. London had become more and more important; and in the embassy to Berkhampstead we see the last act in the story of the Saxon domination—a period of struggle, of gradual growth, of the slow development of great constitutional principles, of increasing wealth, in which, while we can find no trace of Roman influence on municipal institutions or religion, we must attribute its existence itself to the Roman wall. Morally, the Romans did nothing, materially they did everything for Saxon London; and Edward the Confessor in one of his charters made no vain boast when he spoke picturesquely of the city as *fundata olim et edificata ad instar magna Troje*.

* The Londoners' special place in the constitution of England is described more or less clearly by all historians, but perhaps the most comprehensive summary is that of Mr. Freeman ('Norm. Conq.,' v. 411):—"Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third were called to the crown no less than Stephen, by the voice of the citizens of London. And in the assembly which called on William of Orange to take on himself the provisional government of the kingdom, along with the Lords and the members of the former parliaments, the citizens of London had their place as of old."

CHAPTER IV.

LONDON AFTER THE CONQUEST.

WITH the removal of Edward the Confessor to Westminster, the position of London as the capital of England had begun to change. At the Conquest it was completely altered. True, the kings, and sometimes the queens, had henceforth occasionally a residence in the city, but it was no longer a permanent residence. The palace, or a relic of it, of Athelstan and his successors, used to be pointed out before the Great Fire. But when Norman William and his successors had business in London, they lived at Westminster or in the Tower.* If London thus in one sense declined, in another she rose. She became more independent. She began to look to her commerce more and more as her true source of greatness. Her real supremacy was always unquestionable. Westminster, great as it is, and the ring of boroughs which now surround the city, are, in truth, only suburbs. London is the mother of them all. From the time of William she acquired new life. Her liberties and privileges were assured to her, and the history of mediæval London is

* I am not concerned here to find out the capital of England, nor yet to define the word metropolis. London is neither, except it be in the blundering nomenclature of an Act of Parliament. If the capital of a state is here, as in America, the seat of the Law Courts, then Westminster is our capital ; but the new Law Courts are partly within the City boundary.

the history of a long, but eventually victorious, struggle against despotism, encroachment and robbery. The charter which William, king, granted to William, bishop, and Gosfrith, portreeve, is the first of a long list of similar documents, in which the city, bit by bit, recovered from the Crown the true ancient liberty which has been the Teutonic ideal for so many thousand years.

London desiring nothing so much as peace, and having already both had a taste of William's harsh manner, in his burning Southwark on his march westward from Canterbury, and having learned that she fared best under a strong king, received the Conqueror, after a little hesitation, as her just and lawful sovereign. It may be considered certain that there was a strong Norman party in the city. The bishop was a Norman, and if the name of the portreeve be read Geoffrey, as it sometimes is, he may have been a Norman too; one at least of the old portreeves was unquestionably a Norman, for the name of Gilbert Becket, of Rouen, is among the few that remain to us of the list.* William's charter, too, is peculiarly worded. He greets, besides the two great officers, "all the burgesses in London, Frenchmen and Englishmen." The charter is one of conciliation. The English might fear the new dynasty. But William assures them of his friendly feeling, and though we may conjecture that the Norman bishop and the Norman party in general had a voice in obtaining for their fellow-citizens this declaration of the Conqueror's favour, we may also believe that the freedom they already enjoyed in their place of residence

* Green's "London and her election of Stephen," in 'Old London,' p. 296. I shall have occasion frequently in the next few pages to make use of Mr. Green's views, in this brilliant foretaste of his powers, and here acknowledge them gratefully once for all. For a fragmentary list of portreeves see further on in this chapter.

had endeared itself to them, and that they were in no way reluctant to share its continuance. The text, then, of the First Charter is as follows* :—" William king, greets William, bishop, and Gosfrith,† portreeve, and all the burghers within London, French and English, friendly ; and I do you to wit that I will that ye be all law-worthy that were in King Edward's day. And I will that every child be his father's heir, after his father's day : and I will not endure that any man offer any wrong to you. God keep you."

Brief, curiously jealous and scanty, as this document is, it contains a sufficient statement of the condition of the citizens. We learn from it, for example, that the bishop, equally with, or perhaps it would be more correct to say more than, the portreeve, was a great authority. His exact position in the corporation was afterwards defined, but at this time we only know that he lived in his palace

* The original of this charter, or a very ancient copy, is preserved at the Guildhall. It is a little strip of parchment written in a rather more crabbed hand than was usual at that period. Mr. Stubbs gives a careful copy in his 'Select Charters,' p. 79, which differs little from the copy in Riley's 'Liber Custumarum,' ii. 504, except that it is printed in ordinary type. Riley, in addition, prints an old copy in the 'Liber Custumarum,' (i. 246), and an old and very interesting translation into the English of 1314. These are followed by a Latin version. Another English translation is at p. 25. In fact the compilers of the city records seem to have determined that if the original should be lost, a sufficient number of copies would remain to establish its existence. The name of the portreeve is variously spelt, Goffrey (p. 25), Gofregth (p. 246), Gofregd and Gofridum (p. 247). Mr. Stubbs and Mr. Freeman (iv. 29) print it Gosfregth, and Mr. Stubbs translates it by Gosfrith.

† Gosfrith, Stubbs, i. 404. The translation is that of 'Select Charters,' p. 79. Mr. Stubbs points out that the word *port* in *port-reeve* is the Latin *porta* not *portus* and implies a market-place. "From the position assigned to the port-reeve in this writ, which answers to that given to the sheriff in ordinary writs, it may be inferred that he was a royal officer who stood to the merchants of the city in the relation in which the bishop stood to the clergy."

on the north side of St. Paul's, and was proprietor of a great estate in Cornhill, at the other side of the Wallbrook, and of two country villas, one at Fulham and one at Stepney. We learn little of the portreeve, except that there was a portreeve, but there can be no difficulty in forming an idea of his position and duties. He was in the port, that is the walled city, what a shire-reeve was in a county. Much ingenuity may be, and has been, spent in trying to make him out to be more than this. The result has only been to show that the reeve of London stood towards the Crown in no exceptional position. As to the mode of his appointment at this period we know nothing, but there is a presumption, as we shall see further on, that he was elected by his fellow-burgesses.

The first thing granted in the charter is that the citizens should be law-worthy, and we have the historical statement that they had been so under King Edward. By "law-worthy" the king meant that the citizens should have the privileges of freemen in the courts of justice :* that they should not be judged, that is, by a superior, but should have an appeal to the verdict of their equals, as "compurgators," a kind of jury of neighbours and friends who were willing, when a man was on trial, to swear they believed his oath.† There were other forms of trial, and the Normans introduced the wager or ordeal of battle ; but it was never popular in the city. The law-worthy man, then, could give evidence in a court of justice, in his own favour or that of another, and could call upon his neighbours and his friends to justify him. It was a rude kind of law, but from it grew our

* Norton, p. 264.

† According to this view, to be law-worthy meant to be not *in dominio*, demesne, as were many other English cities at the time. I have avoided the technicalities of law as much as possible.

much-vaunted jury system, a system which seems, somehow, unfitted for any race but our own, where it has grown up from small beginnings and become a second nature. The law-worthy citizens had, no doubt, unlawful serfs under them, and there were besides in the city a few people who, though free, had no rights as citizens, from crime or poverty, or because they had not complied with the forms of admission, whatever they may have been.

Further, William allows the citizens to inherit the property of their fathers, a right which had always been one of the privileges of freedom among English and Saxons, but which was inconsistent with the spirit of feudalism.* The estate of the father was divided among his children, and primogeniture had not yet been introduced.

Such is the tenure of William's charter. It will be observed that he introduces nothing new. The citizens were to continue in the freedom they had enjoyed under Edward. We may therefore infer that the English, French, German, Gascon, Flemish, and above all Norman, merchants who frequented the market-places of London, had already, in spite of their mixed origin, combined and organised themselves into a body, more or less corporate, and that to be a citizen of London was to be a freeman with certain definite privileges.

There was an influx of Normans after the Conquest, as might be expected. Many of the citizens of Rouen and Caen, says a nearly contemporary writer,† passed over thither, "preferring to be dwellers in that city, inasmuch as it was fitter for their trading, and better stored with the merchandise in which they were wont to traffic." The Normans had already a colony there, as had the

* And was not accorded to tenants in demesne, except as a special favour.

† One of Becket's biographers, in a MS. at Lambeth, quoted by Mr. Green *ut supra*.

Germans, the "Rouen men" and the "Emperor's men," as they are called in a law of Ethelred; and it was not until the occurrence of a war with some one of the nations represented among the citizens, that any disabilities in the way of trading, and eventually of citizenship, were imposed on foreign-born settlers.*

William granted privileges to the great walled "port," and her mixed multitude of merchants; but he determined at the same time that, though they might remain as strongly fortified as they could against foes from without in general, they should have no defences against himself. For this purpose he determined on the erection of a fort where, without weakening the city, he might yet hold the key to it. The Tower of London is to the wall like a padlock on a chain. A piece of foreshore existed just without the ditch, to the south-east, beyond Billingsgate. In the line of the wall close by there was a strong bastion, either of Roman work, or else built of Roman materials taken from older fortifications. William determined to break the city cincture at this point, and to replace with his own castle the ancient turret. At the time he formed the plan he was encamped at Barking, the nearest rising ground east of the city, and had evidently surveyed the situation with care. The small portion of the wall removed—according to some authorities two bastions—was more than compensated by the strength of the ditch and palisade with which William surrounded his works. When they were completed, they were calculated not only to protect, but to overawe the citizens and to control all the traffic of the river.† Rather less than half the new enclosure was

* See Riley, 'Memorials,' pp. xxxvii. and 151.

† "Military Architecture of the Tower," 'Old London,' p. 13, &c., by George T. Clark. I shall have occasion to quote several times from this valuable paper.

within the old city boundary. The whole Tower Liberty consists of about twenty-six acres, twelve of them within the ditch, of which the western portion is in the parish of All Hallows Barking, in the city of London, and the eastern and larger portion in the county of Middlesex, and the original parish of Stepney.

William did not begin the building of the White Tower till eleven years after Hastings, when, having had some experience of the advantages of the site, he entrusted the work to Gundulf, a monk from the Abbey of Bec in Normandy. Gundulf, who had just been consecrated bishop of Rochester when he received William's commission,* appears to have given his first attention to the repairs of his own cathedral, but arriving in London in 1078, and lodging at the house of his friend, a citizen named Ædmer Anhænde, he commenced the gigantic building on such a scale that though he lived to be eighty-four, that is, for thirty years longer, he did not see the completion of the whole design. The immense mass of the walls disposes of the story that it was injured by the great gale of 1090, though the scaffoldings may have suffered. Mainly, the White Tower is still as Gundulf left it, though the windows were altered in 1663, when the "restorer," Wren, who may have believed the building to have been originally erected by Julius Cæsar, put in classical keystones.† It consists literally of four walls, prolonged into turrets at the corners, and divided into three storeys by timber flooring, and a basement of masonry. It measures ‡ 107 ft. north and south, 118 east

* Stubbs, 'Episcopal Succession,' p. 22, 1077, Mar. 19, Canterbury.

† An example followed by Salvin and other Tower architects in our own day, only that for classical features others, in various Gothic styles, equally foreign to the building, have been employed. Salvin's work is easily recognised by a square-headed doorway or window which he borrowed from a Northumbrian castle, and employed here and at Windsor with disastrous effect.

‡ Clark, *ut sup.*

and west, and is 90 ft. high to the crest of the battlement. It contains a chapel, long used for the storing of records, and afterwards ruthlessly scraped and renewed, so as to have lost every feature of interest except its outline. There is an apsidal curve, apparent from the exterior, where it is worked into the great south-eastern turret. The chapel is 31 ft. wide, and $55\frac{1}{2}$ long, including the apse. There are side aisles, which go round behind the site of the altar, and above them an upper aisle occupies the place of a clear-storey, and as it could be entered from the state apartments on the upper floor, served for the use of the monarch himself, who could attend mass, yet be invisible from below. The chapel was dedicated to St. John.

Here, in 1503, the body of Elizabeth of York, who died in the Tower, lay in state before its removal to Westminster Abbey; and it is probable that the burial of the bones of her two brothers in the staircase wall below, was due to the consecration of the chapel, which would extend to the ground underneath. The crypt, long known as Queen Elizabeth's Armoury, and entered by visitors through a window, and a lower crypt belowground, were nevertheless used as prisons, but perhaps not till after the year 1550, when the chapel was dismantled by order of the Council. It remained a store for state papers for centuries, owing to which circumstance the Tower has been the residence of more than one eminent antiquary as keeper of records, including Lambard and Selden, and the republican Prynne, whose celebrity is of a different kind. When the records were removed in 1857, it was intended to make it a tailor's shop for the soldiers; but the interference of lord Combermere, then Constable, was successful in preventing this desecration.

The chapel and its appendages are the only walled

chambers in the Tower. All the rest are made of wood. It is remarkable that this, the keep of the royal castle intended as the refuge and residence of the sovereign, should contain but one fire-place, and hardly any of the domestic conveniences common to Norman towers of far inferior pretensions and very slightly later date. The main entrance was 12 ft. above the ground, so that the door could be easily defended, and led into a narrow winding staircase. "Supposing a score of resolute men to garrison the keep, they could hold the main door and postern against an army."* As a residence, however, the immense altitude of the state rooms, chiefly 21 ft. high, the excessive coldness, the difficulty of access, the inconvenience of the frequent posts supporting the roof, must have been serious drawbacks, to say nothing of the absence of privacy, although no doubt some of the chambers were screened off by panelled partitions, like the dormitories of old-fashioned schools.

The surrounding buildings and the outer wall are of later date, but are probably on the Norman site. "The circumscribing ditch," as Mr. Clark observes, "though unusually broad and deep, was by no means too secure a defence against a turbulent and notoriously brave body of citizens." The entrance, at the south-western corner, faced towards no street then existing, and Tower Street, Great and Little, must have been made by degrees and through already existing buildings, as is plain from its unusual irregularity of direction.†

* Clark, 'Old London,' pp. 39, 40.

† An irregularity, as I have endeavoured to point out above, partly owing, no doubt, to its traversing whatever traces remained of the eastern wall of the inner Roman fort. Portions of the wall have been found in Mincing Lane and other places adjacent.

One of the last great events of the reign of William I. was the completion of Domesday Book. London was exempted from it. The reason of this is not very clear. It has been used as a proof that London was not in demesne—was not held by any overlord whatever; but from what we know of the disposition of William, a claim to such a condition of independence would certainly have been disregarded. As a fact, the king's interest in London and its suburbs was very small. A few years later, William Rufus had accumulated as much foreshore at Westminster as served for his additions to Edward's palace;* but in 1087 the king had only a few acres in Middlesex. They lay in Ossulston, and are described quaintly as "no man's land," and as having belonged to King Edward. A piece of ground of three and a half acres, which bore this name, was bought by bishop Stratford in 1339, and formed into a burial-place for people who died of the plague. It was afterwards joined to the possessions of the Charterhouse, or Carthusian Priory of the Salutation, and it has been identified, not without reason, as part of the plot of twelve and a half acres, "*de nane maneslande*," which King Edward and King William had owned, and which was valued at five shillings.

The king had also thirty cotters—we are not told where, but within the boundaries of Ossulston. They were probably owners in fee of small villas without the walls; their united rent only amounted to fourteen shillings and tenpence-halfpenny. He had also two other small holdings.

"At Holeburne," says the record, "the king has two cottagers who render yearly twenty pence to the king's sheriff." A distinction may here be intended between

* See below, chapter xvi.

the sheriffs, for in the next line we are told "the sheriff of Middlesex always had charge of these cottages in the time of King Edward."

The other piece of land has often, on slender grounds, been identified with the celebrated garden of Ely Place. It was also in Holborn, and is thus described: "William the chamberlain renders yearly to the king's sheriff six shillings for the land where his vineyard is situated." Attempts have been made to identify this chamberlain as the official who eventually blossomed into "mayor," but the grounds are insufficient.* William the chamberlain was also a holder of lands in Kingsbury, Eia, and Stepney. The first named was a farm belonging to the Abbey of Westminster, and cannot have been long in William's occupation; it had belonged in the time of the Confessor to a certain Aylwin Horne, who had taken it in pledge from a vassal of the abbey. The Stepney holding was under the bishop of London, and consisted of land worth thirty shillings. The holding in Eia, or Eybury, had a little history attached to it. Though William is returned as the tenant, it appears he had lost it four years before, and the king's dues amounting to twelve pounds were unpaid. The manor itself was then part of the estate of Geoffrey Mandeville. Why William the chamberlain had lost his holding we do not know, but the expression of the record, *amisit*, is clear, and we cannot suppose he voluntarily resigned possession.

Another citizen who is frequently named in the record is Deorman.† Among the most ancient records in the

* Mr. Riley in a brief note, 'Memorials,' p. 3, says positively "at this period (1272), the offices of mayor, chamberlain, and coroner, in the city were held by the same person."

† H. C. Coote, 'Transac. Lond. and Midd. Arch. Soc.,' iii. 153. If the reader wishes to see an amusingly erroneous interpretation of an ancient document, he may look at Allen, i. 51, where Deorman is

archives of the city is a little piece of parchment, in many respects similar to the charter granted to London itself by William I. In it "William, king, greets William, bishop," as before ; but the third name is that of Sweyn or "Swegen, the sheriff," and "all the king's thanes in Essex," stand where the burghers of London stood in the other charter. The grant is one of a hide of land at Gaddesden to a man named Deorman. The same man is called in Domesday Deorman of London. He had an estate at Hertfordshire which had belonged to Aylwin Horne, and evidently he was in favour with the Conqueror, and was one of the few Englishmen who held directly from the king without the intervention of an overlord. One of his sons was named Algar, and as it appears that his holding in Islington had belonged before him to a thane of King Edward's, called Algar, it is more than likely that we have here father, son, and grandson. Algar the second was a prebendary of St. Paul's, but his brother Thierry carried on the succession of the family. The Norman name shows the tendency of the times, and Bertram, Thierry's son, goes further and takes a territorial surname, appearing in some charters as Bertram of Barrow. Barrow has been identified with Highbury, a manor in Islington ; and it would seem that the family of Algar continued on the same land till their male line became extinct in the reign of Henry III.

William Rufus carried on his father's works at the Tower, and, as we shall see when we look into the history of Westminster, almost equally great works there. These and other burdens fell on city and county

translated "the people," or at Norton, p. 257, where we are told that the king "merely states that he has granted to his dear man or men (friends) a certain piece of land." One of his sons is named on p. 163, n.

alike ; and the chronicler of the day, in noticing the arrival of Henry I. in London, after his brother's death, mentions that before Maurice, the bishop, crowned him, he made him swear to annul all the unrighteous acts of the late king. How far the city was concerned in the selection of Henry, which took place at Winchester, we know not ; but we do know that though Rufus was only killed on Thursday and buried on Friday, Henry was in London on Saturday and was crowned at Westminster on Sunday. From subsequent events it is clear that to London he owed a debt of some kind, perhaps of gratitude for his welcome on this occasion. His charter, enlarging the liberties of the citizens, already so large, was not granted, we may be sure, for nothing. Unfortunately, although the original document still exists in the city archives, it is undated ; but from the names appended to it, or some other evidence, Rymer ('*Fœdera*') dates it in 1101, the first year of the new reign, and says it was signed at Westminster. The London names may include that of Hubert Roger the chamberlain, but he may have been the chamberlain of Winchester, or an official of the palace. William of Montfitchet, the bishop of Winchester, and Robert FitzRichard, bear London names. Montfitchet's Tower was on the Thames bank, within the city boundary and not far from Baynard's Castle. How Gilbert de Montfitchet, or Montfiquet, who "came in with the Conqueror" obtained his tower we do not know. It may have been an ancient bastion, and have been committed to his charge by the king or by the city authorities. The gates were so leased at a later time, and Baynard's Castle was long held by the Fitzwalters, as standard-bearers of London.* Montfitchet's

* In 1347, the Lord Fitzwalter of the day claimed certain rights and privileges in Castle Baynard Ward, but his claim was refused by the

Tower was demolished and its materials appropriated to the fabric of the Blackfriars' House early in the thirteenth century.

The charter of Henry I. is even more important in the history of the city liberties than that of his father. His grants are of two kinds. They may be classed as remissions, and as gifts. Thus, he absolves the citizens from the payment of any kind of feudal service, such as occasional levies and rates, summed up under the word *Scot* ; from *Danegeld*, a tax which, originally imposed for the purpose of expelling or buying off the Danes, had now become a regular source of royal revenue ; from *Murder*, a tax payable to the king by a district in which an assassination—especially of a Norman—had been committed : from *Wager of Battle*, a form of trial very repugnant to civic ideas ; from having to provide lodgings for the king's household ; from tolls such as *Passage*, or payments at ferries, and *Lestage*, or a tax on leather, which were remitted throughout England to the citizens of London ; and from *Miskennings*, the use by lawyers of an unknown tongue, or, as we should say, special pleading, in its worst sense, in the courts.

The second form of grants was of the nature of gifts. Thus Henry handed over to the city the revenues of Middlesex ; he gave the county to them "to farm," on a payment of 300*l.* a year, which has been made ever since ; and he allowed them to appoint from among themselves a sheriff to receive the demesne dues. In addition they were to have leave to hunt as their

mayor, aldermen, and commonalty, on the ground that it was repugnant to the liberties of the city. Mr. Riley, in noticing this decision, adds that the Fitzwalters had parted with their castle in the reign of Edward I. — 'Memorials,' p. 236 ; and see below, p. 162.

ancestors had hunted in the forests of Middlesex and Surrey and on the Chiltern Hills. A hunting licence of this kind was indeed a great concession from a king of the line of William the Norman.

He also gave them leave to appoint their own justiciar and relieved them from having to resort to any court outside the city. It has been supposed that the justiciar here mentioned means a mayor or chief magistrate, and that the grant includes that of the election of the supreme executive officer of the city. It may be so, but all probability is against this view. For by this time the citizens already appear to have elected their own portreeve, by whatever name he was called; and it is absurd to suppose that the king gave them power to appoint a sheriff of Middlesex, if they were not already allowed to appoint their own. The omission of any reference to the portreeve in the charter cannot, in fact, be otherwise accounted for.

It is very desirable to place this question of sheriffs and mayors in a clear light, and it may be well to endeavour to do so here once for all. The grant of Middlesex to farm, by Henry I., enables us to form a very distinct opinion. From that day to this every citizen of London is a potential sheriff of Middlesex. For every citizen has a voice in the appointment of the officer whose business it will be to collect for him as joint tenant of the king, the king's revenue in Middlesex. The sheriff of Middlesex, therefore, represents the whole body of citizens acting in their corporate capacity. He is not a high sheriff appointed by the king, but rather a sub-sheriff appointed by the corporate body in which the sheriffship is vested. The exact period at which two sheriffs were appointed must have been when the city sheriff, or portreeve, became mayor. The first mayor on

record is Henry FitzAylwin, in 1189,* and though there may have been bailiffs of equal, or almost equal rank and power before him, it is certain that in a charter of Henry II. which, though undated, cannot safely be placed earlier than 1173, two sheriffs are mentioned. It is probable therefore that the sheriff of Middlesex and the sheriff of London finding their duties clash, made themselves an arrangement by which one of them was to hold the county shrievalty on alternate days with the other ; or else that by the appointment of one of them to superiority over the other, a sub-sheriff became necessary. It is very probable that the sheriff of London, a "high" sheriff, that is, if there be any meaning in the term, became mayor ; while the sheriff of Middlesex, a sub-sheriff in the modern sense, had a colleague appointed to do the sub-sheriff's work with him in London. For centuries one sheriff was nominated by the mayor, and the other elected by the people, as in many parishes the vicar chooses one churchwarden and the people the other ; and we find to this day that the mayor performs the duties assigned in a county to the high sheriff. He is still allowed to nominate one or more of the citizens as sheriff on approval, but, as happened lately (1879), the commonalty may refuse his candidate. In civic ceremonies the aldermen, as follows from what I have stated, go before the sheriffs, and so does the recorder on some

* This is the date assigned to FitzAylwin's first mayoralty in the '*Liber de Antiquis Legibus.*' But "it is improbable," observes Mr. Stubbs ('*Chronicles,*' p. xxxi.), "that London had a recognised mayor before 1191, in which year the *communa* was established, at the time of Longchamp's removal from office ; and there is, I believe, no mention of such an official in a record until some three years later." In the first of the two chronicles in this volume the beginning of the mayoralty is placed in 1209. In the '*Chronicle of London,*' printed in 1827 (from Harl. MS. 565, and Cott. MS. Julius B. 1), under the tenth year of King John, is this distinct assertion :—"In this yere was the first maire of London." See below, p. 122.

occasions, if not on all. The sheriffs, in short, are the mayor's deputies.* John Carpenter, who, in the time of the famous Richard Whittington, compiled the so-called 'White Book' of the city records, sums up their position when he describes them as the executors of the mayor's judgments and precepts, as the eyes of the mayor, ever on the watch, and as taking upon themselves a share of that anxiety which the mayor could not bear alone; "for the sheriffs and all their officers both ought to be, and of usage have been, subject to the mayor for the time being as the limbs are subject to the head."

Of the exercise of the other privileges granted to the citizens, we have many curious anecdotes in the old city records.† Two or three which, though belonging to a slightly later period, are in point here, may be taken as examples.

On Sunday, September 14th, 1276, Ponce de More, who was probably a French wine merchant, living by the Thames bank, in the parish of St. James Garlickhythe, sent to inform the authorities that Adam Schot, his servant, was lying dead in his house. The chamberlain and sheriffs immediately repaired to the spot. They called together the men of the ward, which was then called after Henry de Coventre, its alderman, but was afterwards known as Vintry ward, and diligent inquisition was made as to the causes of the unfortunate Adam's death. From the evidence they soon collected, it appeared that the previous Wednesday afternoon he had gone to the garden of one Laurence in the adjoining

* In a letter to the *Times*, lately, a member of the Herald's College gravely asserted the precedence of the sheriffs of London as equal to that of high sheriffs of counties. But it will be seen from these remarks that their position is in reality very different.

† The insertion of these examples in this place is an anachronism; but the letter books, from which they were selected by Mr. Riley, only go back to 1276.

parish of St. Michael Paternoster,* and had climbed a tree to gather some pears. But the branch on which he was standing broke, and Adam fell heavily to the ground. "By reason of which fall," says the narrator, "his whole body was almost burst asunder." In this miserable condition the poor lad lingered through Thursday and Friday and died on Saturday.

The jurors viewed the body, but no wound appeared on it, and they found that no one was suspected of having caused Adam's death. The pear-tree was valued for deodand † at five shillings, and John Horn the sheriff was held answerable for it. At the same time, as a precaution, the two nearest neighbours were called upon to find sureties who would be able to answer for them in case fresh evidence arose, or it appeared that the story told by Ponce should prove untrue. Ponce de More himself and all his household were similarly bound, and the matter dropped.

It so happened that among the sureties there was a man named Laurence Duket, whose subsequent history is very illustrative of the city usages. Eight years after the accident to Adam Schot, he was one day in the market-place, near the great church of St. Mary-le-Bow, and unfortunately fell in with an acquaintance, a clerk named Ralph Crepyn.‡ They quarrelled about a lady with whom Crepyn had very tender relations. Alice atte Bowe, to judge from her name, lived near the church;

* This was a church in the same ward, and not in Paternoster Row, as I have seen it described. I note the point because in my 'In and Out of London,' I mistakenly alluded to this inquest as evidence that a garden adjoined the north side of St. Paul's. That fruit-trees did grow there, however, is proved by a story which will be found in chap. viii., p. 241.

† Deodand was a kind of fine paid for the redemption from forfeiture of an animal or, as in this case, of a tree by which a death had been caused.

‡ See 'French Chron.,' p. 240. Crepyn was M.P. for the city.

and when her dear Ralph was brought home to her on a stretcher, badly wounded, she vowed vengeance on Laurence Duket, who had assaulted him. Laurence, knowing he was in greater danger from the anger of the woman than if the sheriffs themselves were in search of him, fled to the church, and concealed himself in the steeple. But Alice, living close by, had either seen him or heard that he had been seen to hide himself; and she determined, notwithstanding the sacred character of the building, to have him murdered in it. To this end she assembled a number of ruffians in the dead of night, and arranged with them to do the deed in such a way that detection seemed impossible. Acting on her instructions they stealthily entered the church, found the unhappy Laurence, strangled him, tied the cord to the mullion of one of the windows, and retired as stealthily as they had come.

Next morning, of course, information of a shocking discovery in St. Mary's was brought to the sheriffs, who held a hurried inquest on the body. One of the sheriffs was, apparently, among the friends of Alice atte Bow; and, no doubt, he hastened the verdict of *felo-de-se*, which was presently returned. The body of the murdered man was therefore dragged by the heels through the streets, and thrown into the ditch outside the city wall.

But the fact was that when Laurence Duket took refuge in the church he was not alone. A little boy—perhaps a street beggar, perhaps one of his own family, an apprentice or servant, for he was a man of substance—had accompanied him into the sanctuary, and remained with him in the dark church. We can picture to ourselves the poor little fellow shivering behind the tall tomb of some civic dignitary, while he listened to the tread of muffled feet on the marble pavement, and

the whispered council of the murderers, and can realise his horror when, with the dawn of day, he saw the stark stiff corpse hanging to the window-sill between him and the light. No wonder he fled in terror, and was not forthcoming at the inquest.

But his story soon became known down by the river in Duket's old home. All London was stirred ; numerous arrests were made. The whole truth gradually came out. The boy's evidence was fully confirmed, and no fewer than sixteen persons were condemned either as principals or accessories, while the sheriff, Jordan, whose place of residence or business is sufficiently indicated by his surname, Godcheap or Goodcheap, was removed from office. The body of Laurence Duket was found and brought back, and honourably interred in the churchyard ; but the church itself was closed for a time under interdict, and the doors and windows filled up with thorns. The lady who was at the bottom of all this mischief underwent the terrible penalty annexed to murder by a female, and was burnt to death in the market-place, while seven of her accomplices were hanged in the cruel fashion then in vogue. They appear, for the most part, by their names to have belonged to respectable city families. Ralph Crepyn himself, with two other clerks and the sheriff, remained long in prison, but were at length released on payment of fines, or, as the chronicler describes the transaction, were "hanged by the purse." *

The way in which the chamberlain, coroner, or sheriff, as the case might be, dealt with accidents and offences is thus illustrated, and, in addition, a few other examples will be sufficient.

* The full authorities for this tragic tale are cited in Aungier's edition of the 'French Chronicle' (Camden Soc., p. 19.)

On Monday, in March, 1276, information was brought to Gregory de Rokesley, the mayor, coroner or chamberlain,* and to the sheriffs, that Henry de Flegge was lying dead in the dock of the ward of Castle Baynard. They proceeded to the spot, and called together the men both of this and the adjoining ward of Queenhithe, who made diligent inquisition as to the cause of death. Henry de Flegge it appears, not being a Sabbatarian according to modern notions, took his horse to water in the dock on the preceding Sunday morning. The horse, however, fulfilled the warning of the proverb, and refused to drink. Henry spurred him, and the horse, filled, we are told, with exceeding viciousness and strength, carried him out into deep water, where he was drowned. The result of the inquiry must be given in full. "And because it was presented by the jurors that the said Henry de Flegge was first found, after the misadventure, near the quay of Baldwyn le Buscher (Woodmonger), and was removed therefrom, and taken by Henry Lapewater and Roger le Folur (Fuller) to the quay aforesaid, without leave of the chamberlain, the same Henry was attached by John Wyther, carpenter, and Adam Absolon, girdler, and the said Roger by Henry Smith and Robert de Everesham, dyer. And the four nearest neighbours were attached, the two neighbours nearest to the spot where the body was first found, and the two neighbours nearest to the spot where the body was viewed by the coroner. And the said horse was appraised at one mark," for deodand.†

As examples of the right of "infangthief," or the criminal jurisdiction of the mayor and sheriffs over

* These offices were till then united. (Riley, p. 3, note, and Lansdowne MSS. 558, fo. 206.)

† Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 5.

thieves taken within their boundaries, we might select several illustrative cases. One will suffice. Certain Welshmen, thieves, were taken up in 1311 for robbing a lady named Dionisia le Bokbyndere, who had to find sureties that she would prosecute them at the next sessions as having committed burglary in her house "in Fletestrete, in the suburbs of London." * The accused were committed to Newgate, but the king's marshal, Peter de Bernardestone, came and claimed them as belonging to the king's establishment and household, adding that if any one wished to prosecute them he could do so before the seneschal.† To this demand the mayor replied by calling together the "good men of the commonalty," who agreed with him in utterly repudiating the right of the king's marshal to receive custody of the Welshmen, as, "according to the custom and franchise of the city, persons attached within the liberties thereof for such felonies and trespasses as this, ought not to be delivered elsewhere than within the same city, before the justiciars of our lord the king, or the officials of the city." ‡

As an example of the freedom from the billet, or obligation to receive the king or his servants into lodgings, an obligation very strictly and arbitrarily enforced elsewhere, we have the record of the reception in 1317 of the clerk of the Marshalsea, with a request that such lodgings might be assigned by the choice of the city authorities in the suburbs, and of the appointment of two delegates to go with him for the purpose.

It would be easy to multiply examples of this kind.

* Fleet Street was included in the ward of Farringdon Without, when that ward was defined in 1346.

† A court official, or controller.

‡ The sequel is unrecorded, Riley, p. 90.

Very possibly, the city was slow to put its privileges to the test. At first the king's authority was paramount everywhere, but little by little each article of the charter was asserted, and the arbitrary interruptions of the city liberties which at first took place on the occasion of each assertion, especially under weak kings like Henry III. and Edward II., only served to show eventually how strongly they were founded.*

Besides the charter to the citizens, Henry I. granted one to the church of the Holy Trinity at Aldgate, by which he gave it the rights of the old knighten guild, mentioned in the last chapter. This act dissolved the guild, but whether in displeasure or in favour we know not.† The prior of the fraternity attached to the church, whom Stow calls the first canon regular in England, became alderman of the ward of Portsoken, which lies without the wall. Presumably, therefore, the head of the old guild was alderman of the same ward. The dissolution of the guild may have been connected with the other charter. The grants of liberties, as detailed in it,

* Stow (p. 108, Thoms's ed.) gives a list of portreeves, among whom he includes Godfrey, whom he names "de Magun, or Magnavile," in the reign of William I. and William Rufus, and Hugh de Buch, in the reign of Henry I., Auberie de Vere, earl of Oxford; after him, "Gilbert Becket, in the reign of King Stephen; after that, Godfrey de Magnavile, the son of William, the son of Godfrey de Magnavile, earls of Essex." These, he says, were portgraves or sheriffs of London and Middlesex. He goes on to name Peter Fitzwalter and John Fitznigel, as ruling in the reign of Henry II. It is apparent that he mixes up two families by connecting the "Godfrey, Portreeve" of the Conqueror's charter, with the Mandeviles; one of whom, as we shall see (p. 101), was arbitrarily made governor of the city and county by the Empress Maud, during her brief tenure of London. The list of genuine portreeves stands therefore as follows:—Godfrey, Hugh de Buch, Gilbert Becket, Peter Fitzwalter, and John Fitznigel. To these may be added William Chamberlain, at the time of the compilation of Domesday Book (see above p. 86), and the Saxon portreeves, Swetman, Leofstan, Ælsi, Esgar and Ulf (see above p. 74).

† See further on this subject in chapter v.

which I have endeavoured to illustrate by anticipating the chronological course of events, may have been in some way conditional on the suppression of the guild. We saw, in speaking of London under Edward the Confessor, that at one time the head of the knighten guild was portreeve. Whether he was always the portreeve—whether, that is, Portsoken was a kind of manor assigned for the maintenance of the chief magistrate for the time being,—is one of those questions we shall never now, in all probability, be able to answer. It has been suggested * that the office of portreeve was now abolished, and that of sheriff substituted for it, the citizens being recompensed for the loss of their ancient officer by obtaining leave to elect the newer one. If Henry discouraged or disliked guilds, it is remarkable that we first hear of the weavers in 1130, when Robert, Leofstan's son, paid 16*l.* into the exchequer for them. In many cities, here, and on the continent, the weavers are the most ancient and most persistent of the commercial guilds.

The London election of Stephen shows plainly the increasing influence of the citizens in public affairs. Henry I. died early in December, 1135;† and Stephen showed more wisdom than he ever again appeared to possess, when by a forced march he threw himself upon the goodwill of London. The nobles had held aloof from his party, but the burghers supported him, and as the result proved with success. In the four-and-twenty days which had elapsed since Henry's stern rule had been relaxed by death, disorder had broken out. "The traders could see the pillage of their wains as they wound along the banks of the Thames;" London wanted

* Stubbs, '*Const. Hist.*,' i. 406.

† Mr. Green's paper in '*Old London*,' mentioned above.

a leader, a defender, and the far-off empress was forgotten in the presence of a ready soldier. So the aldermen gathered the folkmote "and these providing at their own will for the good of the realm, unanimously agreed to choose a king."* If we may trust the report of the chronicler on this occasion, the citizens reverting to ancient precedents, and remembering what had been done by their fathers in the old Saxon time, asserted that it was the special right and privilege of London to choose the successor of a deceased monarch ; and the doctrine once clearly laid down, no one was found so bold as to dispute it. The meeting was held, no doubt, on the old meeting-ground where the churchyard of the cathedral touched the corner of the great market-place. Hastening from their booths and sheds, the citizens followed their "aldermen and wiser folk," as they defiled in procession across Cheap from their Guildhall ; the speeches at St. Paul's Cross were soon over ; the handsome, graceful figure of the Count of Blois was seen above the crowd, surrounded by the city magnates, who, assuring the people that the new king would confirm their privileges and respect their rights, led the way into the church, where the clergy looked on sullenly. They had no bishop to guide them, and they were moreover already pledged to Maud. But, however inspired, Stephen had a bishop ready. He never showed such promptness and forethought again ; had he conducted the rest of his life after this beginning, the course of English history had been altered. The bishop of London, Gilbert "the Universal," was dead, and no successor had been appointed ; but William of Corboil, the Primate, had been already fetched from Lambeth,† and no time was lost in crowning the new

* 'Gesta Stephani,' p. 3, quoted by Mr. Green.

† The archbishops already rented Lambeth. See below, chapter xxii.

king. "Oath was exchanged against oath. The citizens swore to defend Stephen with money and blood, Stephen swore to apply himself with his whole strength to the pacification of the kingdom."

London kept her promise to the king of her choice. He broke his to her. The annals of his reign are a miserable record of wars and fires and robberies. Scarce four years had elapsed from that winter day in the enclosure of St. Paul's, before Stephen took away from the citizens the right to elect their sheriffs, and only restored it on the payment of a fine, which, though it was but a hundred marks of silver, was exacted at a time when the city was still tottering under the heaviest blow it had received since the days of the Danes. In 1136 occurred what was known for generations afterwards as the Great Fire of London. It commenced near London Stone, in the centre of the city, and spread westward along Watling Street to the newly built cathedral, where it consumed the shrine of St. Erkenwald; and eastward to the gate on the Essex road which had only been opened a few years, and flinging itself with especial fury upon the bridge, burnt even the old woodwork which connected the Roman piers. In short, whatever was left of Roman London or Saxon London, if there can have been anything, was consumed in this the first of the "Great Fires."

In spite of Stephen's perfidy the citizens remained staunch. They had a choice of evils, perhaps, and chose the least; for Maud, when she got the chance, not only rescinded the grants of her father and grandfather, but went so far as to give the earl of Essex * Middlesex to farm, the Tower of London as his castle, the sheriffship

* Geoffrey. It is impossible, at this point, not to recall an earlier period when London was subject to Essex (chap. iii.).

of Middlesex and even the sheriffship of London, and the office of justiciar, so that no person could hold pleas in either city or county without his permission. In short, she did at a stroke what the Londoners had always so much dreaded, and by putting them "in demesne," reduced them at once to the position of any petty town in the country where the overlord plundered as he pleased from his castle on the hill.

This monstrous act roused the inmost feelings of the Londoners. Stephen had been made a prisoner at Lincoln. Essex was busy fortifying the Tower afresh. It was evident he intended to assert his extraordinary rights to the utmost. No citizen was safe in his house or in his shop. His goods and his family were alike at the mercy of the new overlord. Stephen's worst tyrannies were not so terrible as the mere thought of what might now befall them. There was, of course, a weak-hearted party in the city. Its headquarters were at St. Paul's. There had been a disputed election to the bishopric, which Maud eventually terminated by the appointment of Robert Seal (*de Sigillo*) a monk of Reading, and the dean was a leader of the empress's party. But the opposite side was stronger. A deputation of the principal citizens attended at Winchester when the estates of the realm were assembled there ostensibly to recognise Maud as queen. They clamoured for the release of Stephen, remembering perhaps that to recognise Maud would be to stultify themselves, and they complained openly and loudly of oppression.

But the queen's party in the city meanwhile had everything their own way; and a deputation was actually sent to her at St. Albans, where she awaited the decision of the council at Winchester. She was invited to London, and on her entry was received respectfully, if

not enthusiastically. As a return for their surrender the citizens naturally expected a renewal of their ancient privileges and petitioned accordingly, but Maud did not know how to use prosperity, and instead of taking the opportunity thus presented of attaching permanently the most powerful city in her dominions, she behaved with such arrogance, and refused the petition so disdainfully, that waverers and even the more devoted "empress's men" were disgusted and returned or deserted to Stephen. The empress fled. Stephen's adherents, though they could not take the Tower, and probably did not try, were bold enough to march after Maud to Winchester, and were rewarded by the capture of earl Robert, her best councillor and general. This put them on a safer footing, and when Stephen had been released in exchange for Robert, and the Tower had been surrendered to him, London once more breathed freely.

With the accession of Henry II. a period of comparative prosperity set in, and London obtained a confirmation of all the liberties granted by his grandfather, together with some definitions of smaller points in dispute. Henry was the first of the Angevin or so-called Plantagenet kings. With him begins a new era, and a new dynasty. This will be the place therefore in which to pause, and endeavour to reconstruct, if we can, a picture of London as it was towards the end of the twelfth century.

Fortunately for such an inquiry an enthusiastic citizen of London, engaging to write a life of St. Thomas of Canterbury, whom he claimed as a "fellow citizen,"* thought it would not be complete without some account of his hero's birthplace, and adducing the example of Sallust, who, in narrating the history of a Roman expedi-

* "Ejusdem domini mei concivis." (Fitzstephen : Prologue.)

tion against the Moors described the situation of Africa, presents his readers with "a view of the site and constitution of the city of London." His view, meagre to a degree, is yet most valuable at the present day as the earliest account extant. We may have some things to add to it—some few things to correct; but the account written by Fitzstephen tells of what without him we could never have known. He loved the city as his own birthplace and that of the saint of whose friendship he was so proud. He sums up its merits in a few words. London, according to him, was accounted in the reign of Henry II. to be happy in the wholesomeness of its climate, in the profession of the Christian religion, the strength of its fortresses, the nature of its situation, the honour of its citizens, the chastity of its matrons, and the number of illustrious persons that inhabit it.

It is evident from this exordium that Fitzstephen is determined to say nothing but what is good about London. His description has in it a foretaste of the great movements of the thirteenth century. There is a youth and joyousness about it which in itself tells of prosperity. The city, in truth, within its ancient walls, was indeed young. It had been rebuilt almost completely. Its new churches, and the great cathedral church in particular, were sending their shingled spires towards heaven, and new modes of construction in stone were producing results in magnificence and stability unthought of before. The curate of Colechurch was preparing his plans for the bridge which was to immortalise him. Bishop Richard FitzNeal was writing on law and reforming the procedure of the king's courts. Ralph of Diss was engaged in his deanery on the epitome of the chronicles. There was a general wakening to new life. The citizens were now sure of

their position. They had withstood the oppressor and had come victorious out of the struggle. Troubles and contests were indeed before them and they knew it, but they also now knew the way to attain success. Within a few years, before the last decade of the twelfth century had been entered, the municipal constitution received its capstone; and Fitzstephen's ink was hardly dry before Henry FitzAylwin assumed office as the first of the long line of London mayors.*

In spite of the air of happiness and contentment which imparts such a rosy colour to the pages of Fitzstephen, there are sentences here and there which both betray a memory of very different times and an apprehension of their recurrence. This city, he repeats in one place, on the whole, is doubtless most charming; but he adds significantly, "at least when it has the happiness to be well governed." He wrote when Henry had reconciled himself to the Church, and when a momentary gleam of popularity was still reflected on his reign. He mentions as a native of the city Henry III., meaning, of course, the ill-fated prince whom his father had caused to be crowned in his own lifetime, but who died of fever at Limoges in 1184, while engaged in rebellion. In the body of the book, too, he expresses himself as apprehensive of tyranny on King Henry's part: and alludes in this chapter to the frequent fires, while he censures the drinking habits of the inhabitants. On the whole, however, he sees few drawbacks in a city life; though, monk as he was, he takes evidently a keen interest in all manly sports—horse-racing, hunting, skating, even cock-fighting, which last he tells us was practised on

* In 1130 a chamberlain is mentioned as rendering part of the account. Pipe Roll, 31 Hen. I., quoted by Stubbs, '*Const. Hist.*,' i. 406. The mayor is often called "chamberlain" at a far later date.

Shrove Tuesdays by the boys in school-rooms, with the approval of their masters.

One cannot but wish he had devoted a little less space to the amusements of London, and a little more to the topography—that he had omitted the account of a great eating-house at Billingsgate, and told us something of other public buildings. There remains, however, a picture of manners we could ill spare; and, short as is the account of the city, it is all we have. He mentions the wall, with its seven double gates, and tells us that it only extended round the three landward sides, having been undermined by the river on the south. He says there were a hundred and twenty-six parochial churches, with thirteen which belonged to the various conventual establishments. This number must include those in the suburbs. He also mentions three schools, and describes the mode of study. He has much to say of Smithfield, and a little of the shops of tradesmen, though he does not name Cheap.

On the government of the city there are only a few lines. He compares it with the government of ancient Rome, in that, like Rome, London is distributed into regions, and has its annual sheriffs instead of consuls.* He alludes also to the aldermen as senators, and speaks of inferior magistrates, and of meetings on statutable days, which may be a reference to the borough-mote. His heart is evidently in the forest with its hounds and hawks. He dwells with pleasure on the gardens without the walls, and almost the only local names given are those of Clerkenwell, Holy Well, and St. Clement's Well.

Nevertheless, it is possible to attain a little clearer

* In 1130 there were four sheriffs, or vice-comites, who jointly account for the ferm of London. Stubbs, '*Const. Hist.*,' i. 406.

knowledge than what is afforded to us by the actual words of Fitzstephen. The few notes he gives us as to the wall are valuable. The seven double gates must be those which were not mere posterns, or only single gates for foot-passengers. Such a postern existed facing the Tower near the church of All Hallows ; but the easternmost "double gate" must have been Aldgate. This was not one of the Roman entrances, for the simple reason that the Lea was not in the Roman time fordable in this direction. Perhaps the alteration in the course of this river, commonly ascribed to Alfred, may have rendered it possible to make some kind of passage ; and it is evident that several miles would be saved to persons travelling into Essex if they could cross the Lea at Stratford, instead of Old Ford, or by leaving the city at Aldgate instead of Bishopsgate. A fortunate accident hastened the building of a bridge. The queen of Henry I., Matilda or Maude, is said to have run some risk at Old Ford on a journey into Essex, about the year 1110, and in consequence to have commanded the building of a bridge, or system of bridges, over the arms of the Lea, lower down. The road from Aldgate was probably in existence already, and the principal crossing was known as the Stratford—a term which shows that the roadway was paved, and perhaps in part a causeway. The stone arch or arches gave the new bridge the name of Bow.* The exact date of the opening of Aldgate it is now impossible to determine.† The name seems to show us that it was older than some other gate—perhaps Newgate, which was certainly rebuilt more

* As St. Mary-le-Bow is called from its arched crypt, which, in turn, gives its name to the Court of Arches. There is a Stone Bow at Lincoln.

† The traditional story given by Stow and others about King Edgar and the thirteen knights is obviously an anachronism to say the least.

than once. But in the earliest records it is always written Ale-gate or Algate, not Ealdgate, which would be the proper form if Oldgate was meant.*

From Aldgate the wall passed without interruption to Bishopsgate, and thence westward to Cripplegate. If Moorgate existed it was only as a postern,† and Cripplegate was probably little more. Aldersgate came next, and thence the wall led to Newgate, which was first called Westgate and then Chamberlain's Gate, either because the sheriff, coroner, or chamberlain, had there his prison, or because it was rebuilt by some one of the name.‡

From Newgate the wall followed the crest of the deep clay bluff under which the tidal Fleet gave a mooring-place to shipping. Cargoes were discharged at the foot of Ludgate Hill, and it was perhaps about this time that a bridge was thrown across the river, with the effect of restricting the ship traffic, and eventually of impeding the water-course. It is most likely, however, that very few houses were to be seen along the modern Fleet Street, and that the "populous suburb," which, as Fitzstephen says, united London and Westminster, was rather along the line of Holborn than the Strand.

From Ludgate, by Blackfriars, to the Thames bank, there was no other gate, and the wall along the bank had disappeared. The Thames, says our author, which abounds with fish, and in which the tides ebb and flow,

* Pepys spells it Allgate (iii. 265), but we cannot lay much stress on his spelling.

† Newcourt (i. 256) speaks of a place called "the Little Postern," which almost implies the existence of a greater one.

‡ The Compter, a sheriff's prison in Giltspur Street, stood more nearly on the site of the old Roman gate, and may have been the original prison of the portreeve. Westgate is named in a charter by Burhred, King of Mercia, 18 April, 857. (Cod. Diplom. cclxxx.)

runs past the city on this side, but has in a long tract of time, washed down, undermined, and subverted the walls in that part. He is so much more circumstantial than usual in this passage that he must be alluding to some occurrence of note at the time ; and if we remember first that the river wall must have been perfect when Canute failed to take the city by compassing the bridge, and secondly, that the building of the Tower made the river-side walls worthless, we may date their fall a very few years before Fitzstephen wrote.

His seventh gate, we find, was on this south side and defended the bridge. Of the bridge itself he says nothing here ; but he probably wrote while it was still in course of reconstruction after the disastrous fire of 1136. In another passage he mentions a bridge on which spectators stood to watch aquatic sports, but he must allude to Holborn bridge, or some minor work of the kind, as it would have been impossible to fix the trunk of a tree in the middle of the Thames to hang a target on. The point, however, has little bearing on the subject in hand ; for there must have been a bridge of some kind over the Thames, and a gate to defend it.

Of the comparative importance and size of the city gates we may form some idea from an entry relating, it is true, to a much later period, but sufficiently near for our purpose. In 1356 there were many complaints made of the state of the roads leading to the city, and the authorities determined to impose tolls on carts passing the gates. For this purpose collectors were appointed, and we can judge, by the number of collectors at each gate, on which road the traffic was greatest. One collector was sufficient for Ludgate, but the rest had two, and Bishopsgate four.

Fitzstephen tells us little of the interior of the

city. The churches in his day had already attained the number of 126, so that the parishes, as defined at present, were already in existence. To judge by the size of the parishes then, we find that the population was but scanty about Newgate, and not much greater at the East-end about Aldgate; that the river's bank, and the line of the two ancient thoroughfares, the Watling Street and Bishopsgate Street, were the best inhabited; and that already the wide open space about the Cheap was being contracted, and lines of booths were being turned into streets. From his mentioning that the shopkeepers did not live at their place of business, it is clear that to some extent at least the old *selds* or sheds existed in the market-place, and could be removed in case of need, for a tournament or a procession. These rows of selds resembled eastern bazaars. They were so arranged that wares of each kind were exhibited separately, and the modern streets which occupy their place still recall by their names the trade of the ancient occupants.

Thus the Poultry was the poultry market. Adjoining it was the Stocksmarket, so called from a pair of stocks for disorderly persons, on a site now covered by the Mansion House. In Friday Street, leading to Old Fish Street, were to be found provisions suitable for fast days; the bakers had their sheds in Bread Street; corn was sold by the church of St. Michael "le Querne"; there was a Honey Lane, a Milk Street, a Wood Street, a Soaper's Lane,* and so on. Each and all of these were eventually taken for permanent buildings, but at this time and long afterwards Cheap must have been a vast permanent market, or fair. The Cheap consisted of two branches. One lay north of the main thoroughfare; its most southern part was the Poultry. The

* Riley, xviii. Now Queen Street. See Appendix F.

other portion was to the southward and westward and terminated with the changers' stalls close to Watling Street. This corner must have been the Threadneedle Street of the time.* The headquarters of the mercers and haberdashers and other shops for clothing are sufficiently indicated by such names as Hosier Lane, now Bow Lane, and Cordwainer's Street, which gave a name to the ward in which half the market-place was situated. The roadway as far as Bow Church ran along the north side, and thence passed through the Poultry to a bridge over the Wallbrook, close to a church dedicated to St. Mildred. This roadway skirting the market-place was Cheapside. There was no Cheapside at Eastcheap, where the market of produce brought over London Bridge, or into the city by Bishopsgate, was held in the open place formed by the junction of the principal roads.

Other open spaces were the Romeland† at Billingsgate, the Romeland at Dowgate, the churchyard of St. Paul's, which adjoined the western end of Cheap, and was the place for popular meetings, and where a tower stood with a bell to summon the citizens, and the site north of Paternoster Row, to which, in 1225, the Grey Friars removed from Cornhill.‡ London still fitted very loosely within its walls, and many houses, even then, were surrounded by extensive gardens, especially those which were situated close to the wall, "well furnished with trees, spacious and beautiful." Of the street architecture we can form but a very vague idea. The pointed arch had not yet come in. There were few buildings of stone.

* Stow says he has read of no housing otherwise on that side (the high Street of Cheap to the Standard), but of divers sheds from Soper's Lane. Thoms's Stow, p. 97. It was afterwards called Goldsmith's Row.

† In modern pronunciation, Roomy land.

‡ Now Christ's Hospital. It was occupied by shambles.

There was little window glass. Some of the houses of wealthy Jews * may have resembled those at Lincoln, and presented the round-arched and zigzag moulded features of the later Norman style. A few churches, like St. Bartholomew's outside the wall and St. Paul's within, had long aisles of stout columns ; but vaulted roofs were still rare.

Among the thirteen conventual churches mentioned by Fitzstephen, there were, besides the Confessor's church at Westminster, the church of the hospital of St. Katherine beyond the Tower, built by Stephen's queen, St. Mary Overey's priory, at the southern end of London Bridge, founded in 1106, the priory at Aldgate, of which the first prior, Norman, is said to have been "the first canon regular in all England,"† the new Temple church, and the rising buildings of the prior of St. John at Clerkenwell, almost all without the walls,‡ together with two or three which must be noticed separately.

When Fitzstephen tells us of the thirteen conventual churches in London, we cannot but wish he had enumerated them. Our difficulty is to know where he drew the line between city and suburbs. Did he reckon in Barking as well as Westminster? Did he count Merton and Bermondsey? All are within the modern suburbs. Of those actually within the walls the number was but small in his day. A great increase had taken place, both in the number of convents and also in the different orders of monks, friars, and nuns. Stricter

* In 1215 the army of the barons repaired the city gates and walls with stones taken from the ruins of the Jews' houses. Stow, p. 12.

† Thoms's Stow, p. 53.

‡ There were in existence or lately founded about the end of the twelfth century, besides St. Paul's and the churches mentioned above, the hospitals of St. Giles and St. Mary (Spital), the nunnery of Clerkenwell and that of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate.

rules attracted ascetic minds, which had but scant respect for the old Benedictines. The security from Danish invasion, and the reparation of old foundations, acted also as incentives, and the neighbourhood of London was soon full of religious houses. It is possible that the sacred character of the inmates enabled them to dispense with the protection of the walls where laymen would still have feared to build, and the history of a religious house contains almost always some reference to the loneliness, or bleakness, or dampness of the site chosen. Within the city a few monasteries sprang up, but the greatest were about the gates, as at Aldgate, Newgate, and Bishopsgate. The houses then most newly founded were of canons regular, as at Holy Trinity, Aldgate, and at St. Bartholomew's, outside Newgate. Even as Fitzstephen wrote, the first Dominicans may have been making their voices heard in the city, and the first Franciscans have been seen begging in the streets ; but his reference cannot be to them, as their "miserable barrack-like houses" * were still unbuilt.

The family of St. Thomas of Canterbury were slow to appreciate their distinguished position ; but about twenty years after his martyrdom, Agnes, his sister, who had inherited the old mansion of the Becketts in Cheap, determined to dedicate it to religious uses. Her husband, a Norman knight engaged in Henry's Irish expedition, consented to the establishment of the hospital of St. Thomas, called "of Acon." The name has proved an insoluble puzzle. It may have referred to an oak tree which grew near the house, as a church close by was known as St. Martin Pomary, "of apples growing there."† It may have been from the oaken

* Pauli, 'Old England,' p. 60.

† Newcourt, i. 410.

panelling or framing of the principal apartments. At a later period it was looked upon as a reference to Acre, which was taken about the year of the foundation by the Crusaders, and in which a hospital of St. Thomas was also dedicated. Agnes Becket's husband, Thomas FitzTheobald, was baron of Helles, in Tipperary, and the progenitor, whether by Agnes or another wife is unknown, of the Butlers, earls of Ormond, who at a later period connected themselves closely with the house which she dedicated as her sainted brother's birth-place, "in free, pure, and perpetual alms for evermore." A colony of monks of the rule of St. Augustine was placed in it; and soon a fair chapel arose, and the monastic buildings spread until they fronted the market place all the way from Ironmonger Lane to Old Jewry. The parish church, St. Mary Colechurch, was squeezed into a corner, and perched on lofty arches. Two Jews whose land abutted on that of the canons were compelled to give it up. One of them bore a name which was plainly unfortunate for him. It was probably thought little less than blasphemy that a miserable unbeliever like Moses of Canterbury should be settled so near the holy precincts where his namesake was born. We cannot help suspecting Sir Peter of Colechurch, the curate or vicar of the parish, of inciting the monks to this extravagance in architecture. He was a noted builder, and was engaged on the colossal work of making a new bridge over the Thames. In one of its piers he placed a small chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and was buried in it himself. The monks impoverished their house, however, and in the year 1444 their master, John Neel, petitioned parliament to relieve them of their burdens, by altering the constitution of the hospital, so that it might receive the gifts of the faithful.

Among other reforms Neel projected the opening of a school—one of four which he and some other enlightened clergymen succeeded in giving to their fellow-citizens, who, notwithstanding the boasts of Fitzstephen, had but few educational advantages before the middle of the fifteenth century. This period of trouble brought the brethren help from without. The earl of Ormond's claim to be of founder's kin, although supported by a doubtful pedigree, was too good to be rejected, backed up as it was by the gift of a manor and advowson in Buckinghamshire.* The earl came to an untimely end in the Wars of the Roses, but his two successors were buried in the church, which was patronised also in the next generation by the earl of Wiltshire and Ormond, of the Boleyn family, whose terrible son-in-law, Henry VIII., dissolved the monastery.† The Mercers obtained the site, and their chapel and school perpetuated the older foundations.

The great priory of St. Bartholomew, Smithfield, was also in existence in Fitzstephen's time. It is difficult to say when the parish church was first built, but it probably existed long before Henry I. founded the priory in the beginning of the twelfth century. He brought in Augustinian or Black Canons, who opened close by a hospital for the poor. The first prior, Rahere, had seen a vision of the apostle, such was the tale invented by the monkish legend-makers to account for the dedication ; but it is unnecessary. St. Bartholomew's church was rebuilt and annexed to the new foundation.

* Herbert, 'Companies,' i. 262. The date, 1472, quoted by Herbert from Strype must be incorrect, as the earl was beheaded after the battle of Towton, in 1461. There is further confusion in Herbert as to the next two earls, John and Thomas.

† Another hospital of St. Thomas still survives. It has migrated westward from its original situation near Bermondsey Abbey.

The history of Rahere is overlaid with fable, but would be interesting if we could recover it. He is said to have been a courtier of Henry I., and renowned for his wit. He repented while still in the prime of life of his idle and vicious life at court, and made a pilgrimage to Rome, where, during a dangerous illness, he vowed to build the hospital. He obtained the whole parish from the king, it is said, though we are not told how the king became possessed of it. Other particulars, equally difficult to reconcile are added. Rahere feigned madness to attract a crowd, and compelled the people when they assembled to help him with his building. They carried great stones and other materials. They drained the marshy soil. Gradually the hospital rose in all its magnificence, and was soon followed by the priory and the church. We only, however, know for certain, that Rahere became the first prior, and completed the buildings in 1123, after having laboured at them for more than twenty years. He obtained from the king a charter conferring great privileges on the priory and hospital,* which were to be exempt from all servitude except "episcopal customs." He further, as an addition to the endowment, obtained leave to hold a fair in the "smooth field" or Smithfield, adjoining, and for many centuries, down to our own day, "St. Bartholomew's" has been another name for the assembling together of the lowest class of mountebanks and players, and for a period of saturnalian license too frequently ending in tumult.† It was not abolished until 1855.

* There is a possibility that the hospital existed long before, and that the priory was founded to receive a fraternity formed for the charitable purpose of carrying it on. The estates of the two institutions were always separate.

† I do not know why, but Bartholomew Fair has been a very favourite subject with one class of London historians. Most books on old London

The church of St. Paul's must have been hardly distinguishable in those days from that of a monastery. Its canons were in many respects similar to those of the great neighbouring foundation of St. Martin's, which claimed an antiquity very nearly coeval with that of the cathedral. The conventual buildings of St. Paul's were on the north and north-western side, and were very extensive, encroaching towards the north-east on the open market place of Cheap. In later years the precinct was, as we shall see, strictly defined: but in the time of Fitzstephen, when there was probably much open or waste land between the Cheap and Newgate, the church of St. Paul's would have very little to divide it from the church of St. Martin.

The house of St. Martin le Grand had been in existence within the walls from time immemorial. It was in fact one of the oldest monasteries in the kingdom. The dedication seems to connect it with the days of Mellitus and Seberht and Bertha. A later tradition connected it with Wihtred, who was king of Kent in the beginning of the eighth century. But, like many others, this house, however ancient its origin, was wholly renewed in the settled times which followed the last Danish wars, and may be reckoned to date from the reign of Edward the Confessor. After William the Conqueror had been two years on the throne a charter was obtained from him by two brothers, Ingelric and Girard,* in which

are full of unsavoury details of the celebration. Perhaps the most interesting is the passage in Smith's '*Book for a Rainy Day*,' p. 171, where he describes the great Belzoni acting as a mountebank. Mr. Morley has devoted a whole volume to Bartholomew Fair.

* Or Edward. Ingelric is called by Kempe ('*History of St. Martin le Grand*') and others, earl of Essex—I do not know on what grounds. In fact, the charter is open to considerable question, being very unlike contemporary documents of the kind. The privileges of Sanctuary are un-

St. Martin's is specially excepted not only from ecclesiastical but civil jurisdiction, and it naturally became the city sanctuary of every malefactor who could hide within its precincts. That such a public nuisance should have been left unmolested all through the middle ages is strange enough, but that its privileges, and those of other similar places, should have survived until the close of the reign of James I., and long after the church and monastic buildings had perished, is characteristic of the permanence of English institutions, good or bad. Criminals on their way to Newgate passed St. Martin's, and sometimes succeeded in reaching its refuge, from which they could not be retaken. In the reign of Henry VIII. these privileges were curtailed but not abolished: only the greater crimes, such as treason and murder, being excepted. The church of St. Martin was early connected with the guild of saddlers,* and seemed to have been used by them as the scene of their religious meetings. The canons of St. Martin's concluded a convention with the guild, in which they formed a close temporal alliance

questionable, and must have been of great antiquity. For some account of Ingelric or Engelric, see Mr. Freeman's '*Norman Conquest*,' vol. iv. 723, &c. Mr. Freeman doubts the authenticity of the charter of 1068, which indeed is only known by a copy no older than the reign of Henry VI. (Dugdale, '*Monasticon*,' vi. 1323). Kempe perpetuates the story that Engelric was the father of a certain Engelrica, mother, by William, of Peverel of the Peak and other children. Mr. Freeman shows the slender ground on which this scandal rests. Tanner ('*Notitia*') rejects the history of the foundation of St. Martin's by Cadwallein, an ancient British king; but accepts that which makes Victred or Wythred, king of Kent, the founder. It is not necessary to examine such legends critically. "*Wihfred, rex Cantuariorum, filius Ecgeberhti*," died in 725. See Florence of Worcester, i. 42, 50.

* See below, chapter vi. Kempe dates this connection "about the time of Richard the First." Herbert ('*Livery Companies*,' i. 16) makes it still older. The convention refers to an ancient custom made by Ernaldus, the alderman of the guild, at a yet earlier period.

and also promised masses and other religious benefits. It would not be safe to suppose that the modern Saddler's Company is in any way descended from this ancient fraternity, which was evidently of the same character as the other Saxon Frithguilds of which any account has survived. The church of the college was parochial until 1236, when St. Leonard's Church, at the corner of Foster Lane, was built for the laity. After the fire, the parish of St. Leonard was united to that of Christ Church, Newgate Street, and the little church was not rebuilt.

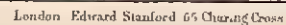
Besides these great monasteries within the city there were others which will be more conveniently noticed in their local sequence when we come to our survey of the suburbs. At the time of Fitzstephen, however, we have seen that already a great many religious houses existed, and we can identify a sufficient number of them, whether in London or in its neighbourhood, to enable us to feel certain that in speaking of "thirteen conventual churches" he has made no exaggeration.

The domestic life of the citizens he hardly touches upon, though there is much about their out-door games, in the course of which mention is made of skating on a "vast lake," northward of London, the remnant, probably, of the marsh which protected the wall on that side.* In the numerous biographies of Becket which were written after his martyrdom there are many quaint sketches of life and manners at this time, and they give us glimpses, the more precious on account of their rarity, of the London home of a wealthy merchant. "We see the very aspect of the house (the Mercers' chapel, in Cheapside, still preserves its site for us), the tiny bedroom, the larger hall," opening directly on the bustle of the Cheap.

* See chapter i. p. 16.

Rohese flings over her child's cradle a coverlet of purple sumptuously wrought.* As he grows older, she weighs him annually, and gives his weight in garments to the poor. Wealthy nobles, and gentlemen "well known at court," visit the portreeve in his city home. The young Thomas hears of the learning and polish of the archbishop's household at Canterbury. He is initiated into the mysteries of hunting and hawking, and takes his pastime as a boy in the great forest of Middlesex.

* 'Old London,' p. 269, in Mr. Green's paper already quoted.



CHAPTER V.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

WE now arrive at one of the most interesting epochs in the history of our city, and yet we have to acknowledge that the authorities are so contradictory, so vague, or so prejudiced that it is difficult if not impossible to obtain an adequate view of the events which characterised it. London in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a city in which the old Teutonic spirit of freedom had never been subdued. In outward seeming at least, it preserved that freedom by obtaining charters to define what before required no definition. The burghers only asked for a recognition of already existing rights. That recognition they obtained easily enough by paying for it; and we have now to see how far they were able to make their freedom a reality as well as a name. The struggle was of a twofold character. Among the whole body of citizens there were always some to whom the oppressions of the Court were not so irksome as the rising of the people. They were often the most influential from wealth or position, or both. They preferred the king's favour to that of the commons. In their eyes the assertors of popular freedom were rebels and demagogues; yet it is through those eyes that we have to look if we would watch the struggle and note the result. The popular party had no chronicler; and the chief record* which has

* 'Chronicle of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London,' attributed to Arnald FitzThedmar, translated by H. T. Riley.

come down to us is the work of a fierce partisan, one who hated and feared the populace, as he contemptuously terms them, and who does not scruple to accuse his opponents of conspiracy, sedition, and cowardice, though by doing so he discredits the whole city. If Arnald FitzThedmar had been more impartial we should lose much which now we know; as it is, his very violence occasionally throws a light on the opposite side, which otherwise we should miss.

The accession of Richard was the signal for a change in the title of the chief magistrate of London. Henry FitzAylwin or FitzEylwin became the first mayor, and so continued during five-and-twenty eventful years. The first was marked by a massacre of the Jews, but as it took place at the time of the king's coronation, and in consequence of a supposed evil intent on the part of the Jews, who crowded to Westminster to witness the festivities, it is probable that FitzAylwin had not yet assumed the reins of the civic government.* For the king was crowned on Sunday, 3rd September, 1189, the massacre took place on the 4th, the new sheriffs, Henry of Cornhill and Richard FitzReyner, were admitted to office on Michaelmas Day, the 29th, and unless, as is possible, the new mayor first acted on behalf of his fellow-citizens, as chief butler at the coronation feast, he did not actually come into office till the 9th November.†

* Mr. Stubbs ('Chronicles of Edward I. and Edward II.,' Rolls Series, p. xxxi.) observes—"It is improbable that London had a recognised mayor before 1191." He is first mentioned in a formal record in 1194, when he was one of the treasurers for Richard's ransom. In the text I have followed the received accounts, which have sufficient probability in the absence of evidence to the contrary. See above, p. 91, *note*.

† There is much confusion about the dates of the early part of Richard's reign, and the City records place these events in 1188, as they make the year begin at Michaelmas. See 'Chronology of History,' by Sir H. Nicolas, p. 300, &c.

"When history drops her drums and trumpets and learns to tell the story of Englishmen, it will find the significance of Richard, not in his crusades or in his weary wars along the Norman border, but in his lavish recognition of municipal life."* With regard to London, however, his only known recognition at this period is a precept addressed to Henry of Cornhill, one of the sheriffs, demanding various articles for the accoutrement of his army and himself. He probably sold lands, houses, and privileges to individual citizens; but although he declared his readiness to sell the city itself could he but find a purchaser, we do not find any record of charters or other similar grants, till after his return from captivity. The armour was provided, no doubt, and Richard set forth for Palestine, while his chancellor, Longchamp, bishop of Ely, took up his residence at the Tower. He immediately began to give offence to the citizens by an active prosecution of the works of defence,† for which purpose he encroached on the city boundaries to the westward to form the approaches, and took in a piece of ground to the north, which belonged of right to the newly founded Priory of Aldgate and its Alderman-Prior. At the south-eastern corner of the precinct stood a mill which belonged to the hospital of St. Katherine, and near it a garden, which, as it closely adjoined the royal apartments, had been let to the king at six marks a year. Longchamp required and took the land to round his corner according to the design which no doubt he and Richard, a master of fortification, had arranged. The so-called Iron Gate stands on the site. These acts, trifling in themselves, but cumulative, caused great annoyance, which was not allayed when Long-

* Green's 'Stray Studies,' p. 216.

† Clark, in 'Old London,' p. 105.

champ seized his rival in the regency, Bishop Pudsey, and imprisoned him; nor when he insulted Geoffrey, archbishop of York, a popular favourite, the son of Fair Rosamond, and half brother to Richard himself. John, supported by public opinion and a large army, summoned Longchamp to Loddon, near Reading, to justify his behaviour. The bishop avoided the trap laid for him and retired through London, and in spite of the obstruction of the citizens, to the Tower.

John's conduct of affairs at this crisis must have given the citizens that false idea of his character for which they were destined afterwards to pay so dearly. Attended by a crowd of nobles and prelates, he came to the Chapter House of St. Paul's and held a council there, and then, having caused the great burghmote bell to be rung in the churchyard, assembled the people on their old meeting ground—a proceeding in itself calculated to bespeak their favour. A letter from the king, dated at Messina, where Richard was already feasting and fighting and love-making, according to his wont, was then read amid the rapturous applause of the assembly. It defined the limited powers of the justiciar, and the citizens by acclamation declared Longchamp's condemnation and deposition. A deputation of the highest rank was sent to the Tower to apprise him of the popular decree, and on hearing it he fell insensible on the floor. In the morning John, attended by citizens and barons and bishops, led the people out to East Smithfield near the Tower, and thence summoned Longchamp to surrender. He immediately came to terms, and was allowed to cross the river to Bermondsey, whence he escaped over the sea.

We find Longchamp back in London in 1194. Among the popular leaders of the day was one of whom the

modern historian would gladly know more. William Fitz-Osbert, a man "poor in degree, evil favoured in shape," and remarkable equally for the long beard which gave him his nickname, and for his eloquence in persuading the people to resist unjust assessments, was summoned by his brother for having said he would be avenged on king and chancellor for an unjust demand made upon him. "I would lay out," he avowed, "forty marks to buy a chain on which I might hang them both, in recompense for the money the chancellor took from me in the Tower."

It is evident that Longbeard had been specially oppressed, but the result of this trial is unknown, and probably the return of the king in that year put a stop to the prosecution. Richard was warmly welcomed by the citizens, who almost immediately took out and no doubt paid handsomely for a renewal of the charter of Henry II.* Longbeard and his friends had to pay for privileges which only benefited the wealthier classes. The city's share of the sum required for the king's ransom had to be raised, and there were great expenses connected with his second coronation and with the prosecution of the mayor's claim to act as chief butler at the feast in opposition to the city of Winchester. For the chief butlership Longbeard cared nothing, but he did care, and roused those about him to care, for an unjust system, which threw the burden of payment on the people. Once more we hear the great bell sounded and see the folkmote assembling with anxious faces and clouded brows. But Longbeard was powerless against wealthy aldermen, and officials fresh from basking in the royal smiles. A riot broke out, and several

* This, the first charter of Richard I., is dated in the fifth year of his reign.

citizens were slain. Longbeard was summoned before the new justiciar, Hubert FitzWalter, archbishop of Canterbury, who, however, seeing the number and apparent determination of his supporters, dismissed him with a mild admonition.

FitzOsbert's prosecutors were not satisfied with this, and took measures to have him arrested. He broke from his guards, and took refuge in Bow Church, in the middle of the market-place, and there, having, it was said, laid up a store of provisions, and fortified the steeple "with munition and victual," he prepared to stand siege and refused to come forth.

Passion Sunday was at hand, and the archbishop, who was present in person, was anxious to conclude the matter. On the refusal of Longbeard and his companions to surrender, faggots were laid to the door and fired, and after enduring the heat and smoke as long as they could, they were obliged to sally forth, half-suffocated and blinded. Even so, some bloodshed occurred before they were secured and lodged in the Tower, and Longbeard was badly wounded by a burgher's son, whose father he had killed. On Wednesday in Passion Week, notwithstanding the sacredness of the season, FitzOsbert and his friends were cruelly dragged by the heels through the city and hanged with every sign of disgrace at the Elms beside Smithfield.

We have these facts for the most part from witnesses bitterly hostile to the popular cause, yet it is impossible to mistake their significance. The people laboured under a double disadvantage. The great men of the city, like the great men of one of the Italian republics of the same period, desired freedom for themselves and nominally for their city; but they were not unwilling to appropriate to themselves alone the privileges purchased

with the people's money. When the king's hand was heavy on the citizens all suffered ; when it was light the great men only were relieved. The civic rebellion of the next century is a struggle, not against the king only, but against an oligarchy. The martyrdom of William of the Longbeard was lamented, if we may believe the chroniclers, by no fewer than 52,000 adherents, miracles were wrought at the place of execution, the gibbet itself was carried away piecemeal, and the sacredness of the season when he was put to death only added to the fervency of the devotees, who "pared away the earth that was be-bled with his blood, and kept the same as holy reliques to heal sick men."

The second charter of Richard is dated a year before his death at Chalons. It relates to the "conservancy of the Thames"; and though the city had from time immemorial claimed the privilege and duty of keeping open the navigable part of the stream, a definition of its rights in the matter was made the subject of a special grant, and, no doubt, charged for accordingly. The grievance chiefly to be remedied was the multiplication of wears or weirs, by which the course of the stream was obstructed ; and the city had leave to remove and prohibit such impediments in the way of open traffic both on the Thames and the Medway. The New Wear, near Rochester, has probably given its name to "The Nore," which is still the eastern boundary of the city jurisdiction.

John was hardly seated on the throne before we find a significant entry in the meagre annals of the day. Five and twenty of the more discreet men, we read, were sworn, together with the mayor, to take counsel on behalf of the city. The events indicated by such a sentence, or by another, under the year 1209, are sufficiently well known. "In this year there were Pleas of the Crown

at the Tower of London." Meanwhile no fewer than five charters were granted ; and it is evident, from the wholly unimportant character of some of them, that they were merely excuses for the receipt of heavy payments. The interdict did not affect London in so severe a manner as other parts of England. There were, no doubt, many private chapels, many conventual churches, to which citizens desirous of hearing mass, and willing to pay for the privilege, could resort.

During all these years the rivalry between the wealthier burghers and the ordinary craftsmen of the city continued to rage. The "prudhommes" were arrayed at every election, at every hustings, against the lesser folk. The wards, as we shall have occasion to notice more distinctly a little further on, were in the hands originally of the landowners, and the alderman was still very much in the position of a "lord of the manor." His office was at first always, and still usually, hereditary. These "barons" of the city, as they were often called, formed among themselves an oligarchy,* and ruled the merchant guild, an association which had control of the civic government, the revenues, and the trade regulations. Against this tyranny the commons struggled in vain. When craft guilds were formed to protect certain trades, they were bitterly opposed, and in some cases actually suppressed. The tradesmen's difficulty lay in the fact that, unless all of the same handicraft joined, their labour was but vain. To insure this co-operation, recourse was had in later times to the crown, and charters of incorporation were obtained. But now, the opposition of a small and

* "It was for the most part an aristocratic constitution, and had its unity, not in the municipal principle, but in the system of the shire," observes Mr. Stubbs, speaking of the Norman period.—'Const. Hist.,' i. 407.

influential party contrived to keep the craft guilds at bay, and the reign of John, much as was accomplished for the vindication of national liberty, left the petty tyrants of the city untouched.

True, these very tyrants were themselves among the magnates of the realm who extorted the Charter in 1215. Geoffrey FitzPiers, the first champion of the cause of national freedom, has often been claimed as a citizen himself, and a descendant of such a city worthy as Godfrey or Gosfrith the portreeve. At the first great meeting of the barons, Geoffrey brought the charter of Henry I. before them, and Stephen Langton expounded its full significance. This meeting was held at St. Paul's. Geoffrey died soon after in his residence at the Tower, only surviving Henry FitzAylwyn, the first mayor, a single year; but archbishop Langton now headed the barons, and on May 12, London threw open her gates to their forces, led by Robert FitzWalter, the standard-bearer of the city. At Runnymede London was well represented, and her liberties secured to her by a special clause of the Great Charter.

The temper of the city was fully aroused by these events. For the first time men began to understand what is now meant by the phrase individual liberty. The commons were not satisfied that their new mayor, FitzAlan, or the general of their forces, FitzWalter, or the Basings and Blunds and Bukerels and other aldermen of wealth should alone enjoy the privileges obtained at so much cost. Efforts were made from time to time to obtain recognition of the popular party. The name of Serlo le Mercer, mayor in the year of Magna Charta, is significant. It denotes the election of a member of a craft, one who had, indeed, no aristocratic or other surname, and who was only known by his occupation.

Meanwhile the meddling of the pope once more made union necessary for the promotion of the common cause. Innocent III. annulled the Charter, excommunicated the barons, and suspended archbishop Langton. King John triumphantly overran the kingdom, and shut up the barons and their army in London. The archbishop, their best or only leader, had been forced to make the long and perilous journey to Rome, to obtain from the pope a reversal of the sentence against him, and also if possible to put the matters at issue in a clearer light. But the papal decrees continued to fall on London at the king's demand; and the citizens, again torn by violent factions, seem to have been unanimous only in defying king and pope alike. "The ordering of secular matters pertaineth not to the pope," they asserted;* and Simon Langton, when he counselled them to ring the bells and celebrate mass as before, acted no doubt on an understanding with the archbishop his brother. We may see in the removal of Jacob Alderman from the mayoralty in 1217, and the substitution of Solomon de Basinges, a temporary triumph of the aristocratic party, the same party which had already committed London to the cause of the French prince Louis. Dover Castle stopped the way, however; and while the siege went on, and the Londoners despatched FitzWalter with a contingent to invest Lincoln in conjunction with a French force, king John died, and immediately the whole aspect of affairs was changed. The young king, proclaimed as Henry III., was speedily crowned at Gloucester; "for by reason of the war still continuing between himself and the aforesaid Louis and the barons of England, he could not come to London and there be crowned."† Peace was

* Green, i. 249.

† 'Chronicle of the Mayors and Sheriffs,' p. 4.

concluded in the following year, but not until FitzWalter, whose military skill did not equal his courage, had been taken prisoner in the narrow streets of Lincoln. But in the treaty of Lambeth the liberties of the city were acknowledged, and the citizens who had been captured during the late hostilities were now set at liberty. The French and aristocratic party evidently came out of the contest with a loss of prestige. In 1217,* "Serlo le Mercer was again made mayor of London, and so continued for five years." FitzWalter never recovered his influence, and the popular party for a brief period became so powerful that Constantine FitzAthulf or FitzOlaf, who at a wrestling match ventured to raise the cry of "Montjoye and St. Louis," was taken up by the justiciar without his aristocratic friends being able to deliver him. No form of trial delayed the sentence, and Constantine and two of his fellows were hanged; though, when he felt the halter round his neck, he offered 15,000 marks to save his life.†

Serlo was succeeded in 1222 by Richard Reinger, another "plebeian" mayor—if I may borrow a term from Roman history—who also ruled for five years. A reaction began to set in about 1227, when the same sheriffs, who, to judge by their names, Henry de Cokham and Stephen Bukerel, belonged to the "patrician" party, served for two years. A contest arose at the end of their second period of office, and the popular party so far prevailed that all the aldermen and principal citizens joined in an oath that for the future they would not permit the same men to serve as sheriffs for two con-

* This is the date in the Chronicle. It means of course the end of the year.

† The wealth of Constantine, his name, and the cry he raised are in my opinion sufficient justification for this view of his case; but he is sometimes, I am aware, reckoned among the popular leaders.

secutive years. Eleven years of comparative tranquillity were passed under two mayors, both of old city families, Roger le Duc and Andrew Bukerel; the aristocratic element reappears in the list of sheriffs; and on the disgrace of Hubert de Burgh and his flight to Brentwood, though the bishop of London was able to restore him to sanctuary, it is evident that the ascendant party in the city had no sympathy with his cause. Their opponents in the following year made an expiring effort, and obtained the election of their nominee to one of the sheriffships. But a charge was soon discovered or invented to displace him. Symon FitzMary, whose name sufficiently indicates his lowly origin, so sadly wasted the property that formed the issues of the sheriffwick that he was not allowed to receive them any longer—so says the Chronicle*—and the clerks of the sheriffwick were entrusted with the task of collecting them, and of acquitting with them “the ferm of his lordship the king.”

We have here the first indication of the growing rapacity of the young king. Symon FitzMary, though the chronicler frowns on him, was unwilling to hand over to the Crown what he considered more than its due. He was opposed, we may be sure, by the direct interference of the aristocratic party, who had by this time forgotten the old cry of “Montjoye,” and joined the brilliant band of courtiers about the rightful heir of Henry II. But they soon found that the weak, rapacious, and fickle king despised them as upstarts, treated them with contempt, laughed at their assumption of nobility, and finally added injury to insult when he threw his weight into the scale against them, and actually commanded them to admit Symon FitzMary to the sheriffship.

* p. 7.

In this bid for popularity Henry succeeded for a time. The poorer citizens looked on him as their champion, the more so as the mayor, William Joynier, absolutely refused to admit FitzMary. Here he was acting strictly within his rights ; and though it is difficult to explain the position taken up by FitzMary, it is easy to see that Henry was engaged, with all the characteristic Angevin cunning, in playing off one party against the other to his own advantage, while he watched for an opportunity of overthrowing the city liberties altogether.

A very small accident gave him this opportunity. Under the guise of supporting the cause of the widow and the oppressed, he was enabled to intervene in the administration of justice, Symon FitzMary being once more made his tool. Whether Symon was a single-minded man—whether he had the liberties of his fellows really at heart—or whether, on the other hand, he was a mere creature of the court hired to do a certain piece of work and reckless of consequences, we cannot tell. But the case of Margery Vyel brought affairs to a crisis.

She was the widow of a citizen named John Vyel, who at his marriage had made a settlement on her, and, having apparently prospered, died the owner of a considerable property. His son was sheriff in 1241, but it does not appear whether this John Vyel, the younger, was the son of Margery or of a previous wife. Be this as it may, she claimed in 1246 to be entitled to a third of her deceased husband's goods, as his widow ; but the city authorities, sitting at Guildhall, gave judgment against her, on the grounds that her settlement was sufficient, and that her husband had made no further provision for her in his will. The widow Vyel was by no means content, and, appealing to the king, brought about a serious con-

flict as to the old question of the freedom of London from the jurisdiction of any but its own magistrates. The matter was made a party question. The king on the one hand was anxious to humble the citizens. He had received several serious rebuffs from them as to the appointment of sheriffs and mayors. Gerard Bat, elected by the citizens as mayor in 1240, had refused to serve, in consequence of the personal ill-will which the king had shown to him. Symon FitzMary, unfortunately, played the king's game for him by opposing the election as sheriff of Nicholas Bat, another member of one of the old ruling families, on the ground that he had served the office in the previous year. Henry had on more than one occasion "taken the city into his hands," as it was termed, appointing the mayor, however, to govern it for him. He was now about to take a much more important and tyrannical step. Having sent Henry de Ba, or Bath, a justice, to St. Martin's-le-Grand, to try the case of the widow Vyel, on the refusal of the citizens to acknowledge his jurisdiction, the king took possession of the city, and, setting aside the mayor and the sheriffs, appointed as his bailiffs William de Haverille and Edward de Westminster. The mayor and principal citizens journeyed to Woodstock, and had an interview with Henry, but could not induce him to change his mind. This was towards the end of August 1248, and the time for new elections was approaching. William of Haverille insisted on the lower officials taking an oath of obedience to himself, and evidently anticipated a prolonged term of office. But on the 8th of September the king changed his mind. Some money transactions had no doubt taken place in the interval, and the mayor and sheriffs were reinstated, undertaking on their part that the city would plead in the king's court as to the

case of the widow Margery, on the ninth of the ensuing month of June.

When the eventful morning arrived Michael Tovy, the mayor of the previous year, who had been re-elected, and the sheriffs attended at Westminster, and were kept waiting for four days before the king could be induced to attend to their business. Meanwhile a kinsman* of the widow had been constantly making allegations against the citizens, and they on their part had actually deprived Symon FitzMary of the office of alderman for taking her side.† When at length they were admitted to the royal presence a new demand was made upon them. Before proceeding to the case in hand, Henry announced to the astonishment of the burghers that he had made grants in Middlesex to the abbot of Westminster—he was at that time actively engaged in the building and endowment of the Abbey—and desired their ratification of certain franchises. For these he proposed to offer certain exchanges of equal value. Now, if there was one thing which the aristocratic party in the city valued more than another it was the farm of Middlesex, with the rights belonging to it, which they had enjoyed since the time of Henry I. For once, after a few minutes' hesitation, they had to fall back on the despised commonalty. "They could do nothing in the matter," they replied, "without the consent of the whole community." Although the king was much angered by this answer, evidencing as it did that on some subjects all classes of the citizens

* Henry de la Mare.

† This Symon FitzMary by a deed dated in 1246 (see Smith's 'Topography,' p. 29) founded a priory at Bishopsgate to be in the special patronage of the bishop of Bethlehem, to whom and his successors an annual payment was to be made by the priory. The foundation still exists under the name of "Bedlam."

were at one, he dissembled for the time, and proceeded to hear the case of the widow Vyel. It was speedily determined against her, and the mayor and sheriffs went back to London victorious but not triumphant, knowing but too well that Henry would not let the abbot's claims rest, and that, in all probability, they would not so easily have won their cause, but for the greater importance of the new demand.

The king, who cared nothing for Margery Vyel, had in fact been victorious. He had cajoled the citizens into coming before his court at Westminster, and he foresaw an infinite number of exactions, fines, gifts, bribes, and other means of replenishing his exhausted exchequer in this one great achievement. The claim of the abbot, unfounded as it was, cropped up at intervals for fifteen years, and was made a constant instrument of annoyance to the citizens. At length, towards the close of 1263, after many events of greater importance had taken place, and while many questions of constitutional significance were still pending, the case was decided, under the rule of Simon de Montfort, in the king's court at Westminster. By verdict upon oath given by twelve knights of the county of Middlesex, it was found that the sheriffs of London had power to enter "all the vills and tenements" which the abbot holds in Middlesex, even to the very gate of the royal abbey itself. The tenants of the abbot were bound to do suit and service like the freeholders of the county at the county and hundred courts. This decision was duly pronounced by the justiciar, Gilbert Preston; and though the citizens denied the jurisdiction of the court, they were not unwilling to accept its sentence when given in their favour. The abbot, therefore, by deed, formally renounced all claim to the privileges illegally given him by the king—

only however to reassert them on the first convenient occasion.

Henry III., in the interval, still continued to plot against the city liberties, and so far carried on his operations under the disguise of supporting the popular cause. A roll, sealed with green wax, was found in his wardrobe at Windsor,* early in 1258. So the story ran, and that the king had read it, and had learned from it that his faithful commons were oppressed by the rich men of the city. How the roll with its green seal came into the wardrobe remained a transparent secret. Henry was at his wits' end for money. He had just accepted from the pope the crown of Sicily for his second son, Edmund; and parliament, at least the assembly which afterwards grew into parliament, had refused his demands for aid to prosecute the claim. The roll with the green wax seal came opportunely to his help. John Maunsell, one of the judges and a fit implement of oppression, was despatched into the city. The folkmote was summoned and assembled on Sunday morning, January the 27th, when Maunsell read the contents of the roll to the people, and added that the king regretted to hear of such oppressions and would by no means permit them. It would be wearisome to go through all the subsequent processes, more or less legal, by which Maunsell brought the aldermen to their knees.† They went with Ralph Hardel, the mayor, a member of the patrician party, to meet the king at Knightsbridge on his return to Westminster; but Henry sent a "certain esquire" forbidding them to come into his presence. On the 1st of February a meeting was held in Guildhall to receive a message

* Spelt Wyndlesore, here and elsewhere in the Chronicle.

† The story is told with painful minuteness by the chronicler already quoted, p. 33, &c.

from the king. The people attended in large numbers, the mayor and aldermen being also present. John Maunsell announced once more the king's desire to inquire into the grievances set forth in the now too famous roll, and desired the city authorities to make oath as to their assessment of tallages and other imposts. To take the oath was not only to endanger themselves, but it was also to give up an ancient and cherished privilege of the city, by which no citizen could be obliged to make oath in such cases as this. These objections were overruled by the voices of the people. They gave assent to the imposition of the oath by loud cries of "Ya, ya"; thus, as the chronicler bitterly remarks, disparaging their own liberties, "which, in fact, these same most wretched creatures had not been the persons to secure."

The king's triumph was thus complete, at least for the moment. Maunsell, well instructed beforehand, lost no time in taking advantage of the popular vote. The mayor, the sheriffs, even the king's chamberlain, were removed. All the rolls of tallages were delivered to John Maunsell. The constable of the Tower, Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk,* became governor of the city. The inquisition, as it was called, sat daily at the Guildhall. Six-and-thirty men of each ward were examined, and a report was prepared on their evidence. All this was done so speedily, that on the 10th February Maunsell had the act of accusation complete, and the city magnates were summoned to Westminster to receive judgment. Here Maunsell told them that they had been guilty of changing the mode of making the tallage; that they had not read the roll of the last tallage to the people in Guildhall, and so forth, a long list of charges being gathered of, it must be allowed, the most trumpery

* Earl Marshal 1245.

character. The aldermen answered, clearing up some of the charges, but, above all, putting themselves on their privilege as citizens of London, and offering to defend themselves according to the laws and customs of the city. An unseemly wrangle ensued. The offer of the citizens was too reasonable to be conceded, and at length they were dismissed with orders to return on the morrow. A new accusation was now made. The matter of the tallages, it was perhaps found, would not be sufficient ; and when the mayor and aldermen came to Westminster they were charged before the king himself with having altered the weights and measures of the city. It was in vain that they pleaded that not the weights but the method of weighing had been changed, and that the change had been made on the recommendation of more than 200 trustworthy men. It was evident that the fable of the wolf and the lamb was being re-enacted. Once more the folkmote was summoned to meet in St. Paul's Churchyard, and John Maunsell,* addressing the people in a kind of sermon from the Cross, promised them all their rights and liberties at the hands of the king, who thus placed himself as it were in competition with the mayor and aldermen. The speaker went on to put a supposititious case, in which he asked the people what they could expect if, when their champion the king accused these men of oppression, they should be allowed to acquit each other, every alderman calling upon his fellows as compurgators. This question, of course, the populace answered as they were expected to answer, in contravention, as the chronicler sadly observes, " of the privileges of the franchises that had been granted unto the city of old, and by their predecessors, citizens of blessed memory, obtained." No conference of discreet

* It may have been one of the other commissioners.

men was held. The voice of prudence was drowned in the acclamations of the populace, "sons of divers mothers," says our historian in bitter scorn, "many of them born without the city, and many of servile condition." The mayor and aldermen once more proceeded to Westminster, where Henry de Ba, their old enemy, gave judgment, suspending them, degrading them, and forbidding them to return to their respective wards without the king's permission. Henry was present, and saw that the time had come for an exhibition of magnanimity. With a few exceptions, one of them being the mayor, all were restored to their offices. William FitzRichard became mayor, and one of the sheriffs was changed, a man of the old Bukerel family being removed, and a tradesman of lower rank substituted.* These alterations and reinstatements did not take place without money payments, yet it is not easy to see what the king had gained by the whole transaction, except the immediate gratification of having humbled the chief citizens. This was the year of the "Mad Parliament" and the Provisions of Oxford, and it is possible that Henry began to foresee a time when those very citizens were the men on whom he might have to depend; that the populace was even more fickle than himself, and that there were men among the city aristocracy who, loyal as they were to their ancient privileges, were also willing, if he would allow them, to stand by the throne in the impending struggle.

Two men were, however, now coming to the front with whom he would have to reckon. What Simon de Montfort did for England, Thomas FitzThomas did for London. He had been sheriff when the tallages question and that of the alteration of weights had been brought

* William Grapefige's name is perhaps enough to prove this.

forward. The roll with the green seal had been found at Windsor when he was but three months in office. He seems to have perceived the probable change of front in the king's policy, and he also perceived that by such manipulations of the folk-mote as he had now twice witnessed, the cause of the people was only ostensibly advanced, but really retarded. He saw that to put their trust in the throne, as against their own magistrates, was but to admit wolves to do the work of the sheep-dogs. As Simon de Montfort called a new power into existence when he summoned the burgesses to parliament, so Thomas FitzThomas, by employing the most ordinary means, and showing the people how to use their own power, taught the "plebeian" citizens to elect for themselves representatives who as aldermen or mayors should do what they could and what the law permitted to remove their grievances. In 1262 the aristocratic party failed in the elections. William FitzRichard* was displaced, and the sheriffs, whose names for the three years of his mayoralty had been Adrian and Cornhill, Bruning and Coventry, Picard and de Northampton, were now Philip the Tailleur and Richard of Walebrook. The new mayor was Thomas FitzThomas.

FitzThomas must have been very busy during this year. It was in his first mayoralty that Henry III. made his retreat to the French court, feigning sickness, and Simon de Montfort was organising his preparations for enforcing the Provisions of Oxford, notwithstanding Urban IV.'s bull absolving the king from the oath he had taken to observe them. Such were the unhappy circumstances of the country† when FitzThomas's first

* His true character comes out in 1267. He became warden of the city at a time when the king abused its liberties after Evesham.

† For an account of Simon de Montfort, and his brief but memorable career, see Green's 'History,' i. 293-307.

mayoralty commenced. His second year was marked by an attempt of the constable of the Tower to take "prisage" of vessels coming up the Thames with corn—an attempt defeated for a time by the vigilance of the citizens, and a declaration on the part of FitzThomas* that force would if necessary be repelled by force. Shortly afterwards he took the oath to Edward, afterwards Edward I., as the king's heir and successor, and administered the same oath to the aldermen, attending for the purpose at the houses of those who were ill. So far there would seem to have been nothing in his rule except evidence of a strong desire to preserve the liberties of the city, and to act with loyalty towards the Crown. But he had already contrived to show the "patrician" or retrograde party among the citizens his determination to uphold the rights of the poor as well as of the rich, yet the Chronicle† which describes him at greatest length was evidently written by one of the fiercest of his opponents, and we have therefore no account which even attempts to do justice to his qualities. He pampered the populace—so we are told. He taught them to style themselves the commons of the city. He gave them the first voice in everything, submitting every important measure to their vote, and asking their will upon it. If they replied with their familiar "Ya, ya," it was done; and the aldermen were little consulted.‡ When Montfort made his great march from Reading to Dover, a deputation of the

* This is clear from the 'Chronicle,' though the mayor's name is carefully suppressed.

† FitzThedmar, 'Chronicle of Mayors and Sheriffs,' already frequently noticed.

‡ The chronicler contradicts himself palpably. The aldermen and chief citizens, he says, were little or not at all consulted, adding, they were just as though they had not existed. With so prejudiced a picture before us, it is as difficult to arrive at the truth as to avoid taking the opposite view too strongly.

citizens was sent with the members of the council at the king's command. They took the opportunity of assuring the earl that he possessed the sympathy of the city; and something like a league was made between him and the burghers to observe the Provisions of Oxford, in fealty to the king, but always reserving the liberties of London. FitzThomas immediately organised the people by their wards. All aliens were dismissed. The "commons" enrolled themselves by hundreds and thousands; vigilance committees were appointed, and the worst excesses which ensued were only the destruction of some houses built upon common land, and the opening of some lanes and rights of way, which here and there powerful or wealthy persons had been suffered to stop.

The conflict between the greater and lesser citizens, the merchants and the craftsmen, came to a head when, upon the earl's first success, he demanded of the citizens that they should formulate such rules as might be to their advantage, promising to obtain their ratification from the king in council. FitzThomas seized the opportunity for legalising the existence of the new trade guilds. He summoned the people, and telling them to organise themselves by their handicrafts, and to make such provisions as should secure the conduct of each, he dealt a fatal blow at the old oligarchy. The chronicler in his hatred of these proceedings styles the new "nations," into which the mechanics had enrolled themselves, "abominations," and describes their guilds, correctly enough, as "solely to their own advantage, and to the intolerable loss of all merchants coming to London." The influence of FitzThomas showed itself further in his obtaining at length the judgment, already mentioned, as to the claim of the abbot of Westminster; thus vindi-

cating his impartiality, and his anxiety for the full recognition of the liberties of great and small.

But as the king, by a fluctuation in the tide of events, began to recover his power, his old desire to annoy the city showed itself anew ; and when November 1263 came round, and FitzThomas was again elected, and actually sworn in as mayor, a brilliant opportunity presented itself for displaying the change of his policy in London. He now no longer sought popularity with the commons ; but on FitzThomas presenting himself at Westminster for approval, sent to the barons of the exchequer a royal writ forbidding his admission to office. This was just before the reference of the questions at issue between Henry and his subjects had been made to the French king.* The news of Louis's award, by which the Provisions of Oxford were declared utterly null and void, was received in most parts of England with something like a sullen acquiescence. But the commons of London, whom, as we have seen, Henry had just gone out of his way to insult, wholly refused to abide by it. They had not, they said, joined in asking for French arbitration, and they would have none of it. After a momentary pause their example was followed by the great commercial towns of the south, the Cinque Ports, and by nearly all the middle class throughout England. Montfort was in Southwark rather hoping for than demanding admission to the city, but the retrograde party among the citizens contrived to keep the gates closed against him. The queen was lodging in the Tower, as during the publication of the award Henry had crossed to France, and on her attempting to join him on his return home, as she rowed in state up the river, the citizens assembled on the bridge reproaching her as the

* Louis IX., called St. Louis.

cause of all their troubles, her foreign relations having by their rapacity and misgovernment brought the king into his present straits. She was at length obliged to turn back under a storm of stones and foul words. The commons were further angered by an attempt which Henry made to take earl Simon from Southwark, and bursting the Bridge Gate they admitted him with acclamations to the city. Here, no doubt, he counselled the steps to be taken for the public safety before he went to attend the abortive parliament which Henry had summoned to meet at Oxford ; and the citizens immediately throwing aside party feeling, and, acknowledging their need of experienced guides in the abeyance of the mayoralty, appointed Thomas Puleston their constable, and Stephen Bukerel their marshal, thus turning apparently to the leadership of their traditional rulers. They rapidly enrolled themselves, being joined by Le Despenser, whom Simon had made justiciar and had lodged in the Tower. Their first exploit was not very brilliant. It merely consisted in a march to Isleworth, where they burnt the palace of the king's brother.*

Immediately on the rising of the parliament the earl of Leicester returned to London. Although he must have censured some of the recent excesses, which included a massacre of the Jews, he cannot but have seen with satisfaction the extensive preparations the citizens had made ; and in the height of his difficulties must have derived the greatest encouragement from his reception in the city. A solemn treaty was drawn up, in which citizens and barons declared "they would stand together against all men, saving, however, their fealty to their lord the king." A march upon Rochester, which they

* Richard, king of the Romans, or, as he is described in the Chronicle, king of Almaine.

occupied with the exception of the Norman keep, was the first service on which the Londoners were employed. They returned home for Easter—the last Easter for many of them—before the battle of Lewes, a battle which has been described as the Flodden of London. Though their cause was victorious, the messengers who brought the news that the king and his brother had been made prisoners, and that five-and-twenty of his lords had been killed or taken, had also to add that “Sir Edward le FitzRoy” had driven the citizens before him like sheep, and had wiped out the insult to his mother in the blood “of a countless multitude” of the commons. The capture of the prince could not restore the husbands and fathers for whom so many wept; and when, on the Tuesday before Ascension Day,* the army of Montfort returned to London in triumph, to lodge the king of the Romans in the Tower, and Henry III. at St. Paul’s, many a cresset fire was unlighted in the street, and many a shuttered front told of death and mourning within.

The Provisions of Oxford being accepted, and the constitution ratified by parliament, the difficulties of the popular party might be supposed at an end. John Maunsell was banished with the queen’s foreign relations, and spent his time scheming with them for a descent upon the southern coast. The king’s position was in reality that of a prisoner, and earl Simon knew how little the acts which he was compelled to sign as a prisoner would avail when he became free. The parliament of 1265 was but scantily attended by earls and barons. The addition of two citizens summoned from every borough to sit with the knights from every shire put the crown on the parliamentary edifice, and “has done more than any incident of this struggle to im-

* 1264.

mortalise" the name of the earl.* They met in the chapter-house at Westminster on the 13th January, 1265. Unfortunately the names of the first London M.P.'s have not been preserved. On St. Valentine's day they received a solemn declaration from the king, that he and his son were bound by the charter and would no more aggrieve or cause to be aggrieved the earl of Leicester, the earl of Gloucester or the citizens of London, for anything they had done during the past commotions. How the king kept his promise the subsequent history of Thomas FitzThomas will tell.

He had acted as mayor during the year of the battle of Lewes, although many of the usual formalities had been omitted, and no "hustings" had been held. On the expiration of the term he was again elected (28th Oct., 1264), and on the morrow admitted to the full exercise of his office by the king. On the 17th March of the following year, the king, now restored as far as it was safe to restore him, to liberty, held a solemn court in the cathedral church of St. Paul. A strange scene took place. When the mayor and aldermen came up to do homage and to renew their oaths of fidelity, FitzThomas addressed the king in these memorable words:—"My lord," he said, in a voice audible to the assembled multitude, "so long as unto us you will be a good lord and king, we will be faithful and duteous unto you." †

The king was powerless to show the resentment he must have felt at this qualification of the oath. He nursed his wrath, as became the son of king John, and in due time exacted the penalty to the full.

* Green, i. 300.

† This anecdote is interpolated as a marginal note by the chronicler, who can scarcely find words to express his horror at the "wondrous and unheard of" conduct of "this most wretched mayor."—*Chron. Mayors and Sheriffs*, p. 77.

The Londoners undoubtedly did not flinch from the duty they had laid upon themselves. Certain persons belonging to the Montfort party were arrested for outrages committed at Stepney and Hackney, during the raid of Simon de Montfort the younger. Having been duly convicted, they were hanged on the 29th June. Meanwhile prince Edward, who had escaped from custody, was engaged in the siege of Kenilworth, and after various skirmishes which concern the history of London only incidentally, had engaged the forces of Leicester and Gloucester at Evesham. The Londoners had cause to remember long afterwards a terrible thunderstorm which burst over their city on the 4th August. To them it was ominous of a long period of darkness and oppression. The news of the death of earl Simon and the destruction of his party came to them in two days' time, and they must have known, or at least feared, the worst. Before the civic year was out, all the king's acts done under pressure of earl Simon were annulled—all the oaths he had made and received, all the donations, charters, and writings to which he had set his hand were recalled; and the parliament, which met at Winchester a month after the fatal day at Evesham, disinherited or outlawed all who had been slain in the battle or taken at Kenilworth. Many prominent citizens were among the "disinherited," as they were called; but the commons met as usual on St. Michael's day to elect their sheriffs, and on the morrow accompanied them, with Fitz-Thomas as their mayor at their head, to be sworn in at Westminster before the barons of the exchequer. But no judges were in attendance. The doors of Rufus's hall were closed against them, and they returned to London with doubt and dismay depicted on every face. Rumours had come to them of a vast force which the

king was already engaged in assembling at Windsor for the reduction of the rebellious city. Some were for fortifying it against the king. Others, comprising, of course, both those of the old court party who had always been against the commons and those whom fear or hope now caused to change their views, were for unqualified submission. They were still sufficiently powerful to take the lead in sending abject messages to the king by the hands of monks and friars. But Henry knew his advantage. The hour of vengeance had come. He turned a deaf ear to all informal embassies; and at last the citizens, whom suspense had by this time wholly demoralised, though a week had not elapsed since Michaelmas Day, sent a letter sealed with the common seal, throwing themselves on the king's mercy. Sir Roger de Leiburne was deputed by Henry to carry his terms to the citizens. They were to remove all barricades, chains or posts from the streets—the beginnings of unfinished fortifications,—to submit themselves wholly in life and limb, and, finally, to send the mayor and the principal men with him to the court at Windsor, ostensibly to confirm the conditions named in the letter. Leiburne met the citizens in the old church of All Hallows Barking, close to the Tower of which he had taken possession, and laid these terms before them, promising a safe-conduct to the mayor and his deputation. There was nothing for it but to obey. They had always professed obedience. They would have had nothing to fear from a constitutional king, such a king as Fitz-Thomas had described in his memorable speech at St. Paul's. On Friday the 5th October, therefore, they set out upon a journey from which some of them were destined never to return. It was not in the nature of such a man as Henry to keep a safe-conduct granted

under the circumstances. After long and vexatious delays, the mayor was admitted to the castle, the citizens remaining without until evening, when they were taken in and lodged in the keep, on the site of the present Round Tower.

The next day the mayor, with Pulesdon, Thovi, Bukerel, and a certain John de Flete, of whom nothing else is recorded, were separated from the rest of the citizens who were lodged in the outer bailey, but, by a piece of the most odious ill-faith, the five first-named were reserved in the keep by the king's orders, their bodies, we are told, being granted to prince Edward and the safe-conduct "availing them nought."

Having thus secured the principal citizens, Henry proceeded to London, where he wreaked his vengeance as he pleased on all who had offended him. He gave away to his followers more than sixty houses, as even the royalist chronicler admits; hostages were demanded for the good conduct of above sixty more; their lands at Lynn and Yarmouth were seized; and finally, in contravention of another promise, Henry imposed a fine on loyal and disloyal alike, amounting to no less than 20,000 marks, or close upon 100,000*l.* of our money. Nor was this all. As if to heap insult on the fallen city, and to add every sign he could of his indiscriminate hatred, he issued a charter in which, acknowledging the receipt of the fine, "he remitted his indignation unto the citizens."

Thenceforth, for six long years London lay at the king's mercy. No mayor was elected, the city being governed by wardens appointed by the king, and by bailiffs chosen instead of sheriffs. Everywhere throughout England the proscribed adherents of earl Simon were in arms. The feeble king could but waste the

public resources, and add to the general confusion, until Edward, his son, now arrived at maturity, and not oblivious of the teachings which in his early youth he had received from earl Simon, took affairs into his own hands, and gradually brought about a semblance of peace.

Clear evidence of the poverty into which London had fallen in these bad times is afforded by the charter in which the prince,* then busy with his preparations for the crusade, remits to the citizens their share of an aid granted to him on the customs of the realm, and even more by the fact that in gratitude they presented him with the paltry sum of 200 marks.

Of the fate of FitzThomas we would fain know something. When he enters the keep at Windsor on that fatal Monday, he disappears from public view. He was alive a year later, at least in the belief of his fellow-citizens; for when, after a form of election, William Fitz-Richard was admitted warden of the city and sheriff of Middlesex, the "fools of the vulgar classes" clamoured for his release. "We will have no one for mayor!" they cried, "save only Thomas FitzThomas." But their longings were in vain. The chronicler of the dominant party mentions very circumstantially a plot to seize the principal opponents of the mayor, which was frustrated by the battle of Evesham, but he puts it into his narrative as an afterthought, three years later; and its insertion may possibly be taken—if it is taken seriously at all,—to mark the receipt of some fresh intelligence of the ill-fated prisoner, perhaps his death. It would be more satisfactory to believe that with the settlement of affairs,

* I call Edward "prince" for convenience. The title was not used for kings' sons till long afterwards. He is usually styled "Sir Edward" in contemporary writings.

or at the accession of Edward, he received his freedom ; but his name occurs in no list of the pardoned, and we see our last of him, perhaps, pacing the leads of the tower on its lofty mound and looking wistfully eastward to where he might descry the smoky canopy of the city which he had loved so well and for which he had suffered so much.

By imprisoning and gagging FitzThomas, Henry did but render his views more enduringly popular. For six years no election of mayor was permitted to take place. The chief magistrates and sometimes their subordinates were appointed by the king. One former mayor, William FitzRichard, stooped to hold power on such terms. But the policy of FitzThomas, which had made the cause of the commons that of the craft guilds, gave fresh strength to the popular party. The oppressions of these six years, and the intervention of great provincial nobles with their armies of half-tamed foresters and yeomen from the bleak hills of the west, only made the citizens of all classes long for a settled government. Custody of the bridge, from whose parapets she had been insulted, was given to the queen. By her the wardenship was farmed to collectors who spent nothing on repairs, so that the whole edifice sustained "great damage and peril." The state of the bridge was typical of the state of the city. At length the increasing decrepitude of the king and the corresponding growth of Prince Edward, both in popular estimation and in personal vigour, gave him sufficient influence in the management of affairs to make some improvement possible. The slaughterer of the citizens at Lewes was forgotten in the restorer of the old law and order. Men remembered that he had pleaded for earl Simon's life, and had followed his mutilated remains to the grave. The abundant harvest

of 1267 had its indirect effect on the prosperity of the citizens. And three years later, in 1270, they obtained leave once more to elect their own mayor.

John Adrian, an alderman of the retrograde party, who had figured among the number of royal wardens, had influence enough to get himself elected; but both he and his sheriffs were displaced in the following year by members of the trade guilds. It is evident from the names as well as from the meagre records of the time, both that the old contest still went on, and that by degrees the new craftsmen were gradually gaining in wealth, influence, and a settled policy. The wards begin to assume their modern names, and are more seldom called after their owners, or the aldermen who govern them. In other words, the great estates were being broken up, and the power of the old families was waning. They put up Walter le Poter, who had been sheriff the previous year, as their candidate for the mayoralty at the ensuing election; but he was defeated by the "mob of the city," who would have no one but Walter Hervey,* a worthy pupil and successor of the ill-fated FitzThomas.

His opinions may be gathered from an anecdote told by his enemies.† He was censured by some persons for wishing to be mayor. No man, it was remarked, ought to have an office who covets it. Such people think only of their own promotion, and nothing of the welfare of those subject to them. Walter Hervey, on hearing this criticism, "made answer to the people standing about him, affirming and swearing by God and by his own soul to the effect that he did not desire to be mayor, or any other officer in the city, for his own sake; but that, solely

* "Who before was mayor," says the Chronicle; but this is a mistake or a misprint. He had twice been sheriff—once by royal appointment.

† Chronicle, p. 156.

from love of God, and from motives of charity, he was willing to endure that burden and that labour." Such was his outspoken policy ; and he further declared his intention of supporting the poor against the rich, and of watching that they were not unduly oppressed in the matter of tallages or civic expenditure.

It may easily be guessed that these sentiments did not recommend him to the old oligarchy. The aldermen appealed in a body to the court at Westminster. Walter Merton was the ruling spirit of the council. The king was ill, or he might have meddled to defeat the moderate proposals of the minister. A warden was to be appointed until five arbitrators on either side had decided on a mayor. Evidently Walter le Poter had retired from the contest, as he is named on the side of the aldermen, with John Adrian, the late mayor, and Henry Waleys, who was destined, in more settled times, to rule the city for many years. Henry de Coventre and Thomas Basing, members of the oldest and proudest of the patrician families, were associated with them ; while Hervey nominated Robert Grapefige, Robert Hauteyn, Alan, a capmaker,* Bartholomew, a grocer,† and Henry de Winchester, a member of one of the older families, who apparently had thrown in his lot with the popular party. Pending their decision Henry Frowyk was made warden.

Before the committee could sit, however, another and greater arbiter had stepped in. Retribution, long delayed, had come at last. With the cries of the men he had so cruelly oppressed ringing in his ears, Henry died. When the citizens assembled in Westminster Hall, clamouring day after day for the mayor of their choice, the noise, we are told, "reached his lordship the king in bed, to which he was confined by a severe illness." This was on the

* "Le Hurer."

† "Le Spicer."

eleventh of November, and he never recovered, but died on the sixteenth, and four days later was buried in the noble church to build which he had robbed his people. There we may still see his handsome fatuous face in the earliest portrait of an English king that has come down to us.

A hush fell upon the contest. The earl of Gloucester going into the city to proclaim the absent Edward, called the people together in their traditional folkmote in St. Paul's Churchyard. Before the meeting, he and the other ministers had so arranged matters with the chiefs of both parties that, when the folk assembled, Walter Merton, mounting the pulpit of St. Paul's Cross, told them that their mayor, Walter Hervey, would be admitted to office.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RISE OF THE COMPANIES.

WHEN the craft guilds became powerful enough to control the election of the city officers, the old system was about to die. Its work was done, but it died hard. By the end of the fourteenth century it was gone. It had arisen in a state of things so different from that which saw its end, that we realise it with difficulty. The small Saxon population which settled within the deserted walls of what had been Roman London, found a wide and empty space crossed by two great paved highways. Their first division of this space was into holdings or estates, some of which may have been of considerable size. Such a space on the north side of the Cheap, was the site of the king's residence.* A similar space upon Cornhill belonged to the bishop. By the river side the holdings were smaller, but comprised spaces equal to two or three parishes. These divisions appear to be older than the parochial divisions, and do not always coincide with them. The two systems were formed independently. When I

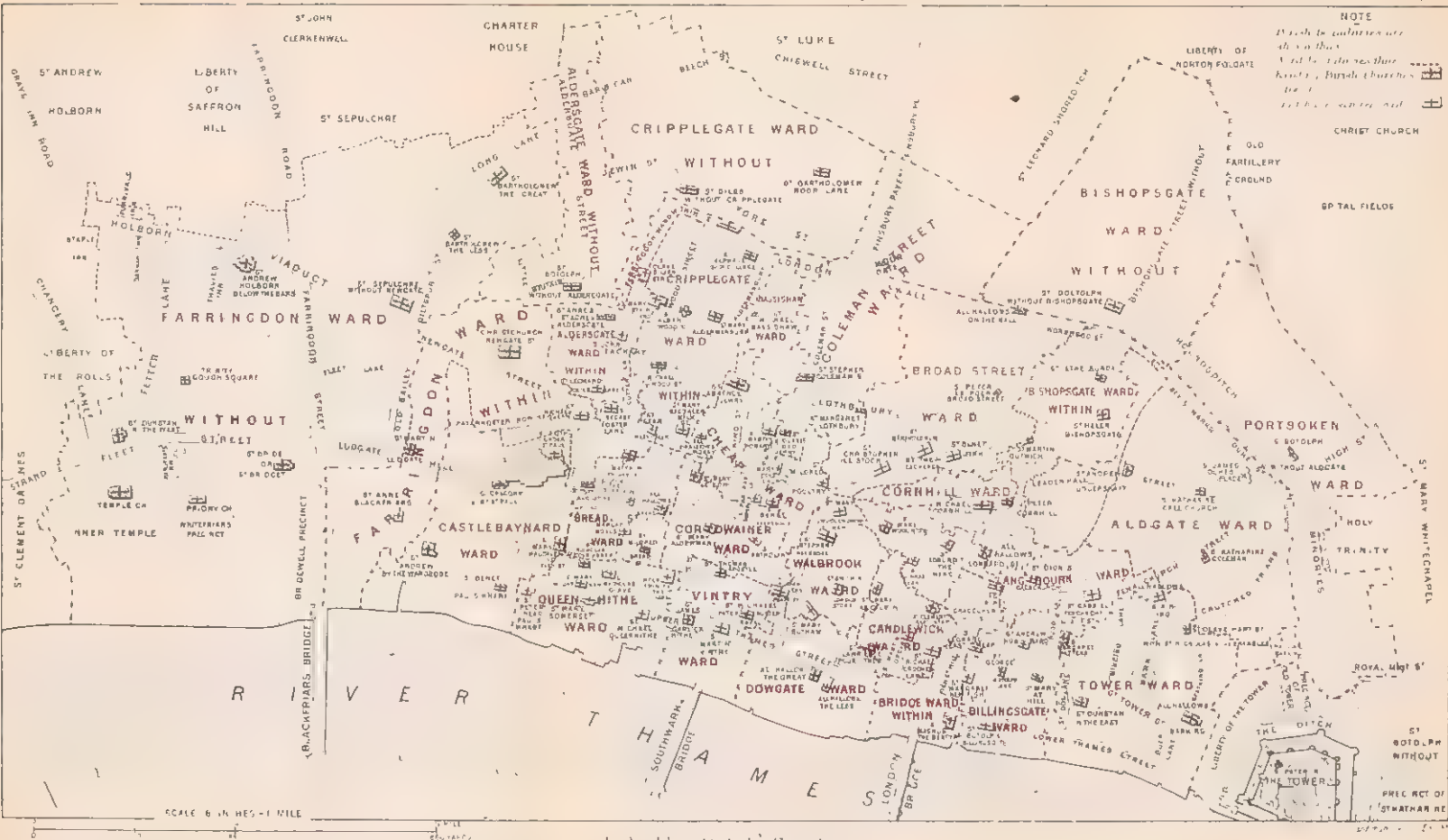
* Gutter Lane, formerly Guthrum's Lane, has sometimes been said to commemorate Guthorm-Athelstane, Alfred's Danish godson. Sir F. Palgrave, in his curious little work the 'Merchant and the Friar,' speaks (p. 188) of "the lane of Guthrun (*sic*) the Dane, otherwise Gutter Lane in the ward of Cheap." Unfortunately, Gutter Lane is in Farringdon Within. The cases cited throughout the volume must be looked upon as more or less fictitious. See below, the story of Simon Frowyk.

THE CITY OF LONDON IN PARISHES & WARDS

1891

NOTE

Dashed lines indicate the boundaries of the City of London. Solid lines indicate the boundaries of the County of London. Churches are marked with a cross. The River Thames is shown at the bottom.



say they appear older, I must allow that it might be fairly argued that they are newer. Still, the preponderance of evidence is the other way, and it seems probable that the earliest partition of London was into estates or holdings, which subsequently developed into wards.

One reason for this opinion may be found by comparing land in London with land elsewhere. In London the holdings are partly in one parish, partly in another. The parishes were partly in one ward, partly in another. The connection between the ecclesiastical and civil institutions is very slender. But in the country, the church and the hall form part of the same range of buildings ; the squire has the gift of the benefice, and his estate is the parish. The two old divisions of manor and parish are almost always conterminous.

The subdivision of London parishes presents some peculiar features. So often do we find churches of the same dedication in close proximity, that it is difficult not to conclude that some large parishes were broken up into smaller parts, each part retaining the old name with a distinguishing addition. Here, no doubt, the influence of property was felt. The alderman or owner of the estate built a new church, and had a portion of the old parish assigned to it. Thus, in the ward of Queenhithe, closely adjoining each other, are the three parishes of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Mary Mounthaw, and St. Mary Somerset.* St. Mary Mounthaw is known to have been at first the chapel of the Norfolk family of Montalt. Two other parishes are also in Queenhithe, and both are dedicated to St. Nicholas. Two in Cordwainers' ward are dedicated to St. Mary. All Hallows seems to have been a large parish in Dowgate ; but, at some period

* Somershithe.

difficult to fix, it became two, "the Great" and "the Less." The reason for this division may be indicated by the fact, that All Hallows the Less was, like St. Mary Mounthaw, the chapel of a great mansion, Cold Harbour, and stood partly over the gate of the courtyard. There are indications that the whole east end, comprising the wards of Aldgate and Portsoken, was once in a great parish dedicated to St. Katherine. We have still, in name at least, St. Katherine's by the Tower, St. Katherine Cree, and St. Katherine Colman. So, too, we cannot help observing the close proximity of St. John Baptist and St. John the Apostle; and the churches nearest to All Hallows Barking had subsidiary dedications to All Saints, as had also St. Dunstan's, in the neighbouring eastern parish of Stepney.

There are probably a few other examples of this kind: one of a different kind is found in Bassishaw, or Basinghall, a ward which is remarkable as being conterminous with the parish of St. Michael, and as one of those which retains the name of its ancient owners. The Basings were evidently of Saxon origin.* Their settlement is at a considerable distance from the river, but forms the smallest ward north of Cheap. That it was long kept open, perhaps in a kind of park or large garden, appears from its having been selected at a later time for the site of a number of trade or craft halls, no fewer than four of the companies having had their headquarters in Bassishaw, together with one of the

* But Heath ('Account of the Grocers' Company,' p. 82) considers them to have been Italians, as they are mentioned among the Lombards, in the 'Hundred Rolls' of 2 Edward I. So are Gregory Rokesley and others; and the reference is too late to prove anything. A Lombard was probably by this time a money-lender, not a native of Lombardy. Mr. Riley thought "Bassishaw" referred to a family of Bassett, but no such family is known to have existed in the parish.

city courts, and the family mansion of the Basings. A few other wards retain their ancient names. In the oldest records all were personal. "The Alderman," says Carpenter, writing in 1419, "has his title from the ward over which he presides, as 'Alderman of Chepe,' for example 'Alderman of Bridge,' 'Alderman of Quenehithe'; in ancient times, however, on the contrary the ward was styled after its Alderman."* Candlewyke Street ward was at one time called that of Thomas de Basing. Castle Baynard, and Tower Street, were both at one time named after the Hadstocks, another patrician family.†

Of those wards which retain the old family names, the most prominent are the two Farringdons, Without and Within. In 1279, William Farringdon purchased the estate of Ralph le Fevre, which is described as the ward of Newgate. About the same time he also bought the reversion of the "ward of Anketill de Auvern," which comprised Fleet Street and the parish of St. Bride's.‡ It is not very easy to ascertain what he bought, whether, that is, he became owner of the land, or of the incumbency of the office of alderman. By the end of the thirteenth century the great estates must have been in part broken up. It is hardly credible that one man should have been able to buy an estate which comprised the

* 'Liber Albus,' p. 30.

† The ward of Cheap was that of Henry le Frowyk; Vintry, of Henry le Covyntre; Bridge, of John Horn; Cordwainers, of Henry le Waleys; Langbourne, of Nicholas de Wynton; Aldgate, of John de Northampton; Wallbrook, of John Adrian; Broad Street, of William Bukerel; Aldersgate, of John de Blakethorn; Billingsgate, of Wolmar de Essex; Bread Street, of William de Durham; and other examples might be given before 1280.—See Riley's 'Memorials,' *passim*, and Appendix L.

‡ Joyce FitzPeter, sheriff in 1211, appears to have had this ward before Anketill. See a very curious paper by Mr. Palmer in the 'Reliquary,' xvii. 36, notes K and L. He witnesses a deed relating to "Sholand" or Shoe lane as *Joc. Filio Petri tunc Aldermano warde*, then alderman of the ward—which ward still remained anonymous. See below, vol. ii., 69.

whole of the western suburbs from St. Bartholomew's round to the Temple ; together with Newgate Street and Ludgate Hill. We only know that he was alderman for that part of the double ward which lay within the wall, and that in 1393 the outer part claimed and obtained the right of electing an alderman for itself. Although, therefore, in this particular case, it would not be easy to say of what the estate of William Farrington consisted, if it was more than the baronial jurisdiction, there is plenty of evidence as to the holdings of other great city families. Besides the Basings, we have the Fitz-Aylwins of London Stone, who owned the advowson of the adjoining church of St. Swithin, and, indeed, the whole parish itself. Henry, the first mayor, was in all probability the son of Aylwin, called Aylwin "Child," who was wealthy enough to found and partly endow the priory of Bermondsey.* The son of Henry, Peter, called FitzMayor, inherited an immense estate, which he bequeathed to coheirs now represented by some of the highest nobility. The Becketts, who came from Rouen, had held some property on the north side of Cheap. The Bukerels had Bukerelsbury, on the opposite side. They came, it is believed, from Italy. Arnald Fitz-Thedmar, whose Chronicle throws such light on the political movements of the thirteenth century, was of German origin.† The Pountneys lorded it on the site of the Roman fort, and the Bats, the Rokesleys, the Blounts, and the Cornhills, who were among the old landowners of the city, counted themselves the equals or the superiors of the great country lords. Henry III.

* See below, chap. xxii. Also the very curious preface to the '*Liber de Antiquis Legibus*,' by Thomas Stapleton (Cam. Soc. 1846).

† See the family legend in the '*Chronicle of Mayors and Sheriffs*,' p. 201.

taunted them as "churls who called themselves barons." * When the aldermen ceased to be merely landowners they similarly ceased to be looked upon as barons.†

In addition to the great estates, which gradually became wards, there were certain sokes, or liberties, in London, which survived a few years as exempt jurisdictions. Some of them actually became wards, others were absorbed. They were of the nature of wards or manors, but were not endowed with the same privileges of self-government till long after the great estates of the aldermen had become wholly free. One of them became eventually the ward of Cornhill, but was at first the soke of the bishop of London. The standard-bearer had a liberty at Castle Baynard. The knighten-guild had a soke outside Aldgate, which subsequently became Portsoken and a ward. The queen, Maud, or Matilda, had another. The cathedral church of St. Paul had a small liberty, comprising the precincts.‡ The priory of St. Bartholomew seems to have had a similar liberty, as we read in 1246, of their "sokenreve." It appears to have been absorbed in Farringdon Without. The word "soke" is very loosely employed by old writers, and sometimes appears interchangeably with "ward." The heads of wards had *sac* and *soe*, or the rights composing baronial jurisdiction, and the proprietors of sokes as distinguished from wards, had the same. The steward or bailiff of the bishop had probably the government of Cornhill. In 1228, the bishop made a declaration of his rights in the soke, and obtained recognition of them from the citizens, the chapter of St.

* The mayor ranks as an earl (Norton, p. 260), and was so assessed under Richard II. In the city he ranks immediately after the sovereign, but at the Duke of Wellington's funeral, Prince Albert, as representing the Queen, preceded the Lord Mayor.

† See Stubbs, iii. 561.

‡ There is a curious reference to it in Pepys's 'Diary,' iii. 348 (Bohn).

Paul's, and the king's treasurer.* But in 1291, the soke had become a ward, and soon afterwards we find an alderman mentioned. All such exempt jurisdictions were, however, gradually subordinated to the general civic government. In 1347, the citizens refused to recognise the liberty of lord Fitzwalter, on the express ground that it was repugnant to the liberties of the city.†

The history of the ward named Portsoken, which contained two of these liberties, is not so brief. Aldgate, there is reason to believe, was not one of the original or Roman gates of the wall. In what year it was opened we cannot say, perhaps in the reign of Edgar, perhaps in that of Edward the Confessor. It was certainly in existence by the time of Henry I. when queen Maud made the bridge over the Lea at Stratford. Adjoining this gate she had a "soke." To the northward was another estate or soke, that belonging to the knighten-guild already mentioned. In 1107 a canon of St. Augustine opened a house at the gate near a church dedicated to the Holy Cross and St. Mary Magdalene, which had been built by one Syred‡ some time, we do not know how long, before. In the following year, the preaching of the Augustinian, whose name was Norman, began to attract great attention; the queen, whose confessor he became, granted him her property in the gate itself and the soke adjoining, to found a house of which he was to be the first prior, and

* The whole document appears as an interpolation in the '*Liber de Antiquis Legibus*.' See Riley's '*Translation of the Chronicles of Mayors and Sheriffs*,' p. 210. And Brentano, in Toulmin Smith's '*English Gilds*,' p. 59, where there is an account of a "soke" belonging to the bishop of Worms.

† There is a very lively account of lord Fitzwalter's claim and its rejection in the '*Merchant and the Friar*,' p. 149.

‡ Syred, or Sired, was a canon of St. Paul's T. R. E., and is mentioned in D. S.

which was to be dedicated to the Holy Trinity.* How the queen came to be possessed of the gate I do not know. It is very possible she actually opened it and built it, and that there was no gate at this point in the wall before her time.† The knighten-guild were connected with the church of St. Botolph Aldgate, which goes to prove that they had a corporate existence before Aldgate existed. Nay, it is possible that the guild existed before the church of St. Botolph itself was built: because it is described as standing on land which belonged to them.‡ Norman's popularity increased. He obtained property in the city, the advowson of churches, and other benefactions. The "good queen" as she was called, did not live long; but her popularity must have contributed to his. Ten years after the foundation of the priory she died at Westminster, and was buried in the abbey of her uncle. The king confirmed her gifts to Holy Trinity, Aldgate, and when, some seven years later, the brothers of the knighten-guild§ took the strange resolution of joining Norman's little

* After the Dissolution this house and church wholly disappeared. The church of the convent of Minoresses has been confounded with it by Cunningham and others. There is a cartulary of the Priory of Aldgate among the archives of the university of Glasgow. See Third Report, Historical MSS. Commission. A new church of St. James, Duke's Place, was consecrated in 1623, but has since been removed.

† Stow and others, deceived by the name, have endeavoured to give a very ancient origin to Aldgate.

‡ They "gave seisin to the prior on the land itself through the church of St. Botolph, which is built on it, and is, as they said, the head of that same land."—Stevens, 'Continuation of Dugdale,' p. 75.

§ Their names are given as Ralf, son of Algod, Wimard le Doverlishe, Orgar le Prude, Edward Hupcornhill, Blakstan and Albyn his kinsman, Albyn and Robert his brother, the sons of Leostan, Leostan the goldsmith, and Wizo his son, Hugh the son of Wlgar, Algar Secusun, Orgar the son of Dereman, Osbert Drinchepyg, Adelard Hornpiteson. A charter of William Rufus is recited by Stow and another of Henry to the men of the knighten-guild, in which they are granted, "the guild that belonged to

band of canons, he confirmed the grant of their soke to the priory.

The most interesting point to be noticed here is that the prior became alderman of the Soke of the Port : but when is not known. In 1264, Prior Eustace, holding that a regular priest had no call to act in temporal matters, delegated his authority to a bailiff, as the bishop had done in Cornhill ; but few of his successors seem to have been of his mind, and Stow describes the prior-alderman as sitting in court and riding with "the mayor and his brethren the aldermen, as one of them, in scarlet or other livery as they used."

After the reign of Henry III. the great landowners of the city had no longer any place as such in the governing body. The aldermen no longer owned their wards. The names are fixed, the offices purely elective. The constitution of the city, in fact, had undergone a complete change ;* the oligarchy was broken up ; the danger which at one time threatened, that London would fall first into the hands of some local tyrant and then into that of the king, as in the case of the great

them and the land that belonged thereunto, with all customs " as they had the same in the time of king Edward and king William. This was the soke conveyed to the church in 1125 by Ralf and his companions. The list of their names is curious. It contains a very early mention of Cornhill, one of the brethren being Edward "Hupcornhill." There are two Leostans mentioned ; one of them a goldsmith, whose son Wizo is with him ; the other, whose trade is not given, and whose two sons Albyn and Robert are among the brethren. There is also a son of Dereman, no doubt the same Deorman to whom William the Conqueror had given the Essex charter still preserved in Guildhall. See above, p. 87.

* Mr. Stubbs ('Const. Hist.,' i. 407) seems to think that a previous civic revolution took place on the "disappearance of the portreeve, the conversion of the knighten-guild into a religious house," and other changes before the reign of Stephen. It is elsewhere (p. 630) described as a victory of the mercantile over the aristocratic element. We have now to witness the victory of the craft-guilds over that mercantile element.

cities of the continent, was averted; and when we look back through the names of the chief agitators and political leaders of this time of transition, one name stands out as that of the man who more than any one else prepared the way for the Whittingtons, the Larges, the Greshams, the Beckfords of later generations, and who set the ancient liberties of London on a foundation so secure that they remain practically what they were after the lapse of half a millennium. Walter Hervey was the political pupil of FitzThomas. He succeeded to the championship of popular rights. When, in 1272, he granted charters of incorporation to the trades, and took a step which, so to speak, hardened the companies in the mould—gave them a consistence, that is, which in spite of the subsequent forfeiture of his charters, they never lost,—he only carried out the system which FitzThomas had introduced during the ascendancy of Simon de Montfort.

The history of the city companies is much complicated by that of guilds. A "frith-guild" existed as early as the time of Athelstan. The knighten-guild which Henry I. recognised was in existence at a very early period—so early that tradition assigned its foundation to king Edgar. What the guilds were may to a certain extent be ascertained. Some were religious, some were merely social. But those of greatest importance were mercantile. They were comprised in the "town guild" at the Guildhall, and controlled or endeavoured to control the whole policy of the city. It was to counteract the oligarchical action of the town-guild that Hervey gave organisation to the "handicrafts." The original guild was undoubtedly "an institution of local self-help,"* and of the highest

* Miss Toulmin Smith, 'English Gilds,' p. xiv. In the sketch attempted here I have occasion frequently to use the words of this remarkable essay.

antiquity in England. Guildship and its duties are mentioned in the laws of Athelstan, in the canons of Edgar, and by Henry I. The "Cnihten Gild" or Young Men's Guild of London, of which mention has been made so often, had a charter from Edward the Confessor, to which Stow refers, but which is now lost.* These ancient associations bound themselves to pay for masses, to insure against fire, to provide funerals, to assist each other in fines, and, in short, to encourage peace and goodwill among fellow-citizens.†

The institution of mercantile guilds is also very ancient. Their constitution is recognised by Glanville. Writing in the reign of Henry II., he uses the phrase "commune, in other words a gyld," meaning a town whose corporation had set up a guild. London must have been such a town, as is proved by the existence of a guildhall. If a countryman came into such a town and resided there undisturbed for a year and a day, and was received into the "commune, otherwise gyld" (*communiam, scilicet gyldam*), he became a freeman and could not be recalled into "villenage."‡ Mercantile guilds existed at York, Leicester, Preston and other places before the end of the twelfth century.

The third kind of guild was that of the handicrafts-

* Cunningham, Palgrave, and others derive the name of Nightingale Lane from the Knighten Guild. It is well to look with suspicion on these plausible derivations. Miss Strickland's "Chere Reine" Cross is an example. Nightingale Lane is not in Portsoken, and was much more probably called from the birds which sang in it or from an ale-house sign. Stow makes special mention of the rural aspect of this district in the sixteenth century.

† Frith-guild means an association for a peaceful purpose.

‡ The case of Simon Frowyk is detailed in the 'Merchant and the Friar,' p. 140. Frowyk is a bondsman of Alan, Lord Zouche, who endeavours in vain to detain him when he finds him on his glebe after he has become a citizen of London. The story is partially fictitious.

men. The struggle in London was between them and the communal guild, or mercantile guild, which, wholly in the hands of those landowners and merchants who constituted what I have ventured to describe as the patrician party, oppressed the mere craftsman, as in other times manufacturers, so called, have oppressed their workmen. They resembled rather the modern trade union than anything else, and seem to have existed before 1180, when the guilds which had not a charter from the Crown—that is to say, all but the town or city guild itself and that of the weavers, were fined. This marks the first victory of the oligarchy in the struggle.

It has usually been asserted* that on this occasion the “adulterine” guilds, as they were called, were suppressed. It is true we do not hear of them very often; but the same record which gives us their names when they are first made to pay, mentions them again a few years later.† They were eighteen in number, and paid sums varying from the forty-five marks of the goldsmiths to the half mark of “the guild whereof Hugo Leo is alderman.” It has yet to be proved that these were in any sense trading companies, or that their aldermen had any municipal rank as such.‡ The word alderman was often used of any one who was senior officer of an association. The guilds of 1180 were presided over by men of whom we hear little or nothing in the city annals. If they had been aldermen in the modern sense they would appear as

* Stubbs, iii. 574, for example. The word “adulterine,” by the way, was also applied to castles erected without a licence to crenellate.—Stubbs, i. 333.

† Madox, ‘Hist. Exchequer,’ i. 390.

‡ Ralph Flael is said by some to be the alderman who sold a ward to William Farrington. This is a mistake of Flael for Fevre. In any case Flael could hardly have been alive in 1297.

sheriffs and mayors in their turn.* Peter FitzAlan, who was alderman of one of the Bridge guilds, and is spoken of as dead,† cannot of course be the same as the Peter FitzAlan who, sixty-seven years later, was mayor when the case of the widow Vyel first came up. There was a William de Haverille, sheriff in 1190, who may very well be the same as the William de Haverhill, who is named as alderman of an otherwise anonymous guild, fined ten marks; but such an exception only goes to prove the rule. A few years later there is mention of several trades as having certain bonds of union, this time not for peace but for ill doing, among themselves. The goldsmiths, by which we must understand the workmen employed by the goldsmiths, fell out with the tailors, and the cloth-merchants and tanners joined in a fray which resulted in thirteen persons being hanged, "that others, put in awe thereby, might take warning; so that the peace of his lordship the king, by all within the city, might be the more rigidly maintained." The weavers, again, by their superior wealth, and their superior organisation, were constantly exciting the envy, not only of other trades but also of the city guild itself.‡ They had taken care to

* Both these points have been assumed of late. In Herbert the question is further complicated by carelessness. He says there were "four gilds de Ponte, or of the Bridge, Thomas Coke, alderman." If we turn to the record, however, we find, it is true, four gilds "de Ponte"; but they have four aldermen, of whom "Thomas Cocus" is only one:—"Gilda de Ponte, unde Thomas Cocus est aldermannus, debet j marcas. Gilda de Ponte, unde Ailwinus Fink est aldermannus, debet xv marcas. Gilda de Ponte, unde Robertus de Bosco est aldermannus, debet x marcas. Gilda de Ponte, unde Petrus Filius Alani fuit aldermannus, debet xv marcas." Thomas Cook was therefore not the head of four local guilds, but only head of one, and that the poorest. Mr. Stubbs (iii. 561) speaks of three "as aldermen of the Gilda de Ponte," as if there was but one guild. It is a serious thing to differ with Mr. Stubbs, but the facts are plain.

† So at least I understand the word "fuit" in the record.

‡ The weavers were everywhere important. See Toulmin Smith, 'English Gilds,' 120, and Stubbs's 'Const. Hist.,' iii. 572.

obtain acknowledgment as early as 1130, when Robert, son of Levestan, who may have been their alderman, paid 16*l.* into the treasury for them. They had a charter, more or less formal, in which Henry I. enacted that no one should exercise their trade in London or Southwark except he be a member of their guild. This was confirmed by Henry II. On the establishment of the mayoralty the weavers had a narrow escape. In 1202 the citizens offered the king sixty marks to suppress the guild, but they had money as well as influence, and the king only renewed their privileges, while he increased their annual payment. "Although," as Mr. Stubbs remarks, "there is no positive evidence to connect them and their fellow-guildsmen with the factions of Thomas FitzThomas and Walter Hervey, or with the later troubles under Edward I., it is not at all unlikely that their struggle with the governing body was a continuous one." Edward gave them a charter so worded that they assumed powers of self-government, which the city authorities could not recognise, and in the following reign a verdict against them was obtained after long litigation.*

It was perhaps in consequence of this verdict that the old corporation of the weavers resolved itself or was divided by a higher power into its constituent elements, and we henceforth hear of the drapers, tailors, and others, but no more of the weavers till long after. There is, however, absolute silence on the subject in the works of

* Mr. Stubbs oddly observes (iii. 574) that at the end of the reign of Edward III. the guilds had increased to forty-eight, but that "the weavers were not in the first class : the grocers, mercers, goldsmiths, fishmongers, vintners, tailors and drapers being evidently richer." But the tailors must be identified with the telarii or weavers, who would otherwise have unaccountably disappeared, since they are not named at all, even among the inferior companies.

London historians. The phenomena are altogether peculiar, and but few facts can be picked out as tolerably certain. The weavers touched on one side the trade in linen, on the other that in wool. The woollen drapers were naturally very much divided in their interests from the linen-armourers,* and the tailors who constructed garments, as well from the vegetable as from the animal production, were distinct from those who wove the cloth. We find, therefore, not only great dissension at times among the weavers, but a strong tendency to establish separate interests. The drapers, under their Latin designation of *pannarii*, very soon divided themselves from the tailors, *cissores*; and, though there is no evidence of their separate existence† before 1299, when the tailors' records commence, it is very probable that from time to time they both rebelled against the tyranny of the weavers. Certain it is, that this powerful guild, which had subsisted through all changes and chances from the time of Henry I. at least, now suddenly and unaccountably disappears; while from its ashes rise the tailors—to whom long after, in the reign of Henry VII. the title of "Merchant Taylors" was conceded—the cloth-workers, at first "shermen" and fullers, and the drapers, all of which preserve, more or less dimly, a tradition of their previous united state of existence.

How far these guilds, now organised as companies, influenced the final division of the wards it is impossible to tell. The question turns on whether we are to regard the aldermen named in the list of adulterine guilds as

* Not necessarily makers of armour.

† It is wholly unproved, and indeed against all probability, that Henry FitzAylwin, the first mayor, was a member of the guild and left them houses. In fact, it was at the commencement of his term of office that the transaction already described took place, when the weavers out-bribed the authorities of the Guildhall.

aldermen of city wards, or whether we may take them to be merely the heads, or chairmen, so to speak, of their several societies. We cannot very well identify them as aldermen of local divisions, seeing, as has been said, that in one locality alone, four names of aldermen occur. The probability is that though in 1318 it was ordained that the freedom could only be acquired by the member of a "mystery" or trade guild, the wards and the companies were perfectly distinct from each other, and the aldermen of wards from aldermen of guilds. There was, in fact, a certain amount of antagonism between them.* In 1346, for example, the common council-men were nominated by the wards, in 1375 by the companies, and in 1384 by the wards again. Other similar changes, showing indeed a close connection but at the same time a certain rivalry, went on for many years before the constitution of the city was settled on its present basis.†

It is not impossible to localise certain trades. The goldsmiths were always seated in the ward of Aldersgate. Ralph Flael, their alderman in the reign of Henry II., is said to have "held the ward in demesne."‡ The drapers were now unsettled, but the mention of their houses at St. Mary "Boathatch," a lock-gate or

* Stubbs, iii. 574, 575.

† The identification of the adulterine guilds with the later companies is scarcely possible. The goldsmiths, of which Ralph Flael was alderman, may have developed into the wealthy company of that name. So, too, the piperarii may have become grocers, and the butchers have survived to be chartered. But it is with doubt that I would suggest the identity of the later company of merchant-tailors, at whose head was, not an alderman, but a pilgrim, with the "*Gilda Peregrinorum, unde Warnerius le Turnur est Aldermannus.*" There were eighteen guilds, and four being in one locality, the number of wards represented, if wards were represented at all by the aldermen of the guilds, would be but fifteen. This is more than improbable.

‡ Herbert, ii. 127.

dock on the Wallbrook, and in St. Swithin's Lane as well as by St. Mary "Woollen-Hithe," and in Broad Street, may be accounted for if we remember their probable identity with the great guild of the weavers. After their separation the tailors seem to have had a hall in Cordwainers' ward, and then to have bought the ground on which Merchant Taylors' Hall still stands, in the lane which their trade endued with the nickname, now long become permanent, of Threadneedle Street. The drapers, who wandered with the weavers, found a resting place in Cornhill, though their anniversary was kept in the chapel of Bethlem Hospital. From Cornhill they migrated to St. Swithin's Lane, where they seem to have hired a hall from John Hende. It was not until 1541 that they moved to their present quarters in Throgmorton Street, a house built by Cromwell, earl of Essex, on the ruins of the Austin Friars, and forfeited by his attainder.* The bakers, who as a guild are almost as old as the weavers,† may have flourished in Bread Street ward, and the shoemakers in Cordwainers.

The German merchants kept to the river's bank, where they had their own house, the Steelyard. Stow quaintly speaks of the "Haunce of Almaine," but the word *Hans* is old English and means, literally, guild.‡ Their house was close to the mouth of the Wallbrook, in the ward of Dowgate, and surrounded with quays and stores. The head was termed an alderman, though he was certainly not alderman of a ward. We read of the Easterlings at a very early period as living together under strict regulations, and considering themselves a

* See a curious account of the vicar-general's tyrannical proceedings in Stow, p. 67 (ed. Thoms), quoted below, chapter x. p. 309.

† There are frequent entries in the rolls of payment for the "Bolengarii."

‡ Stubbs, i. 411.

colony of the great continental towns of the Hanse, Cologne, Lubeck, Rostock, and the rest. The German families in the city were numerous and wealthy, but cannot have belonged to the Steelyard, the members of which kept wholly apart, leading a celibate, almost a religious life, in the monastic sense, and looking forward, no doubt, to the time when they might leave this remote island and return to their dear fatherland.* The German Guildhall (*Gildalda Theutonicorum*) is frequently mentioned before the reign of Edward IV. when they acquired a larger house, known as the Steelyard, from their *stafel*, *staple*, or market in it. The merchants of the Steelyard engaged in the thirteenth century to keep Bishopsgate in repair.† They seem to have been the same with "the emperor's men," or Easterlings, declared by Ethelred to be law-worthy; but it is not certain, as these are described as resorting to Billingsgate.‡ That their credit or their money was accounted good is clear from our expression "sterling," as the equivalent of real or "royal." §

Another very ancient society was that of the saddlers. Their guild seems to have been connected with the church of St. Martin-le-Grand, and to have been wholly religious. An agreement between Ernald, their alderman, and the canons of St. Martin, which makes mention of the antiquity of the society, cannot itself be much later than the reign of John.

Such are the chief indications of the organisation of guilds and companies before the accession of Edward I. The civic revolution, which is described at the close of

* See above, chapter iv.

† Herbert, i. 10.

‡ Riley, 'Memorials.'

§ An interesting account of the English nation at Bruges in the fifteenth century is given by Mr. Blades, 'Life of Caxton,' chapter iii.

the last chapter, brought these organisations to the front. The tyranny of the patrician party had succeeded by the union of its members. Their common interest, and above all the necessity for excluding the lower classes from a share in the government, acted as a bond. There was constant disunion in the opposite ranks. The trades could not agree together. United action was only possible on great occasions like that which led to the election of Hervey. To him, or to some astute adviser, occurred the solution of the difficulty. It was obviously impossible that the trades could be bound together. The weavers were already disintegrating. No universal bond could be found. The new mayor took the business into his own hands. No longer striving for one great union against the city guild, he organised all the different trades separately, and assuming, as chief of the city executive, the right to grant charters of incorporation to the craftsmen, he called a new force into existence. Bringing order out of disorder, he faced the aldermen with a hydra-headed combination, against which the struggle was soon found to be useless. The charters which he granted were not called in question while he remained mayor, which was only for the one year reckoned from the king's death in November 1272. The chronicler from whose one-sided pages we have so often quoted, makes many insinuations as to Hervey's conduct during the new king's absence, but they are inconsistent; and without endeavouring to exalt his character above the average morality of the time, we may yet look on Walter Hervey as worthy of the dignity conferred on him by his contemporaries, and worthy also of a larger measure of historical fame than has yet been accorded to him. The founder of a system of civic government which is still, nominally at least, in full

force, does not deserve the oblivion in which London has been content to leave his memory.

The mayoralty of Walter Hervey terminated in the usual way, and a member of the aldermen's party was permitted by the commons to succeed him. Henry le Waleys, or Galeys, a merchant trading with Bordeaux, of which city he was mayor a year later, was elected. He had hardly taken the oaths, when a disagreeable incident occurred. His sheriffs, Cusin and Meldeburne, men belonging to his own party, were convicted, one of having taken a bribe from a dishonest baker, the other of having connived in the fraud. The customary contest as to jurisdiction between the government at Westminster and the City authorities took place, but the precedent of Simon FitzMary having been adduced, the citizens deposed their sheriffs, and elected in their stead two men of the oldest and proudest families, by apparently such a reaction as constantly occurs in public opinion. In conjunction with the mayor, they immediately attacked the charters of the craftsmen. Occasion was easily found. The charters had been disobeyed: "a certain person" had worked in contravention of the statutes contained in the charter which he and the men of his trade had obtained. They came into the Guildhall, where the mayor and the aldermen, including Walter Hervey, alderman of Cheap, were assembled. The complainants were asked where they obtained their charter. From the late mayor, Walter Hervey, was the reply. Hervey boldly acknowledged the authorship, not only of the charter in question, but also of a number of others. The mayor kept silence, but Gregory Rokesley, an old and wealthy alderman, afterwards, "Master of the Exchange," ambassador to Flanders, and mayor after Waleys, rose and expressed his opinion that Hervey's charters only

had force during his mayoralty, and that they were framed in such a way as to benefit the rich, and oppress the poor. The aldermen assented, but Rokesley's bid for popular support did not succeed. Hervey withstood him to the face, and a "wordy and abusive dispute" ensued. Hervey, when he left the Guildhall, assembled a great crowd of those to whose trades he had granted charters, in the church of St. Peter in Cheap—where now a green tree refreshes the dusty street—and promised to do what he could to maintain the charters. For the next two days he was busily visiting his adherents "through the streets and lanes of the city," and strengthening the weak-hearted and waverers. But the oligarchical party, remembering the tumultuous scenes at Westminster which had preceded Hervey's election, went to the council, then sitting in St. Martin's-le-Grand, and by representing the probability of a similar outbreak, and the consequent danger to the "peace of his lordship the king," easily persuaded them to issue a writ in the king's name for the apprehension * of Hervey. But twelve compurgators speedily acquitted him, and Christmas ensuing the matter dropped for a few days.

On New Year's day, 1274, the mayor and citizens met once more in the Guildhall, and Hervey's charters were brought in by the tradesmen and impounded by the mayor, who, a fortnight later, in open hustings, had them read, their alleged dangerous character explained, and the injury they would cause described, after which it was ordered, with the assent of the people present, that the members of the different trades should follow their crafts as before, and that the charters should be held of no weight.

* The writ is so worded that the aldermen may have thought themselves justified in arresting Hervey—though they are not directly commanded to do so.

It is evident that some intimidation was used to obtain the consent of the people to the loss of their charters. But still more high-handed proceedings were about to be taken.

The great market-place of Westcheap was, as we have seen, covered with booths, arranged in order according to the nature of the wares exposed for sale. The whole of the ground now occupied by Wood Street, Milk Street, Friday Street, Honey Lane, Ironmonger Lane, and so on, was then like a country fair. "I read," says Stow, "of no housing otherwise on that side of the street, but of divers sheds." Such for many centuries was Cheap, the Forum of London, *Warda Fori*,* as it is called in the old records. The roadway of which Stow speaks, ran along the edge of the market place, whence it obtained its name of Cheap-side. In the centre stood the great church of St. Mary "le Bow," so called on account of its stone vaulting. Before the church was a tilting ground, but all the rest of the open space was let out from time to time for the sheds of various provision dealers, arranged by their trades. They did not live in their booths,† and the permanent population of Cheap must have been small. It was, no doubt, these tradesmen who had made Walter Hervey their alderman, and at this, the constituency of their enemy, the patricians determined to aim their next blow. An edict went forth announcing that the young king was coming home, that the city must be in order to receive him, and that, as a step in this direction, the market-place must be cleared.‡

* Letter-book A, p. 116, and Lansdowne MSS. 558, fo. 205.

† Fitzstephen.

‡ The proclamation recorded in the 'Chron. Mayors and Sheriffs,' p. 173, only mentions two trades; but it is clear from a consideration of the whole passage that all the others suffered.

The shopmen had in many cases paid handsome sums of money for the privilege of selling their goods at what they regarded as permanent stalls in Cheap. The mayor, backed, no doubt, by superior power, asserted in reply to their remonstrances that the sheriffs who had given leases had done so on bribery. He ruthlessly carried out, apparently in one day, the removal of the sheds. The king's eye must not be offended, he said, by the sight of any refuse lying about ; and his severity fell with peculiar weight on the fish-mongers and butchers. They appealed to Guildhall on the morrow. The mayor and aldermen were assembled to "plead the common pleas." The complaint of the unfortunate salesmen was laid before them, and the reply of the mayor is very significant. He had evidently been consulting with the council, and knew how far he would be supported ; at the same time he did not scruple, in order to crush the plebeian rising, to surrender, and to acknowledge virtually that he had surrendered, the liberties of the city. For he made answer that what he had done he had done by order of the king's council, thus endeavouring to shield himself.

Hervey, we may be sure, made the most of this admission. The king's council had no jurisdiction over the chief magistrate of London. Again a "wordy strife," says the chronicler, ensued. The mayor was openly reproved by Hervey before all the people. At length, stung by his reproaches, he broke up the meeting and betook himself to his friends at Westminster. Here the final course of action was resolved upon. Hervey's supporters had been dispersed to their houses out of the city and into various other wards, by the clearing of Cheap ; and now, without further delay, Hervey himself must be silenced.

Accordingly the interrupted pleas were reopened on the morrow. From what ensued it is evident that the meeting was carefully packed. "Certain persons of the city, of Stebney, of Stratford and of Hakeneye," Hervey's dispossessed constituents, no doubt, were excluded. The mayor had learned his lesson well. A "certain roll" was read in which were detailed the various "presumptuous acts and injuries" which Hervey had committed. He had not attended at the exchequer to show the citizens' title to the Moor : * he had attested that a certain man was an attorney who had never been admitted ; he had allowed ale to be sold in his ward at three-halfpence the gallon, contrary to an order of the aldermen ; he had taken money from the fishmongers to plead their cause ; he had allowed wine to be carried out of the city, and had received presents of a tun and a pipe and twenty shillings from different wine merchants ; he had converted to his own use some money collected by his followers for the advancement of the interests of the lower orders in the elections : such were the charges trumped up against him. Among the articles of this strange accusation were two, upon which no particular stress was laid, although, in reality, the whole object of the roll was to press them. They related to the charters and to the proceedings of the previous day, when Hervey had "made unjust complaint against the mayor, who had warranty sufficient for what he had done," namely, that of the king's council. It is curious to observe that the poor people dispossessed of their stalls in Cheap are described as "certain persons of the city, of Stebney, of Stratford, and of Hakeneye," who came with him to the hustings. Thus it appears that the fishmongers and butchers who had their shops in the

* Finsbury Moor (Riley).

market-place lived out of town and only came in to business. Cheap, in short, in the thirteenth century, was like the whole city now.

The object of the mayor in clearing Cheap was soon apparent. In the depopulated ward a new election would ensure the return of an alderman very different from Hervey, and the mayor had no difficulty in obtaining a vote deposing Hervey, and ordering the "aldermanry" to choose a successor.

From this time Walter Hervey disappears from the city annals. What became of him we cannot tell. The work he did lived after him. Twenty years later he was spoken of as an improver of the city,* but his struggles for the handicraftsmen were forgotten in a new order of things. He may have lived to see the partial triumph of his efforts when, in 1298, at the return of Edward from his Scottish campaign, the citizens assembled by their trades to give him welcome. He may even have survived to see the first royal charters given to the companies by Edward III. By imparting corporate life to the old crafts he had conferred on them a political consistence not easily destroyed. To him they owed their ultimate victory over the old oligarchy. Within a few years their place among the ruling powers of London was fully established, and a list still extant among the earliest records of the city preserved in the Guildhall shows us the wards reorganised, and marks the completion of the civic revolution he had initiated. That he was so soon forgotten, is not to the credit of his successors in London. It is not very clear why this should be. It is not because of the remoteness of the time at which he lived and worked. Richard Whittington is a modern hero, yet he

* Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 25, where mention is made of his having rebuilt the bridge over Wallbrook, at the eastern extremity of his ward.

entered into the labours of such men as FitzThomas and Hervey in the century before his own. It is strange indeed that the city preserves no memorial of the only martyr among the mayors, or of his pupil, the man who before any other recognised the importance of the handicrafts, and by substituting companies for guilds made them the future rulers of the municipal commonwealth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WARDS AND THE COMPANIES.

THE rule of Edward I. in the city was stern. The citizens of all parties had welcomed him home from the Crusade with a display of enthusiasm which told at once of their sufferings in the past and of their hopes for the future. The reorganisation of the municipality must have been their first care. The establishment of the livery companies on the one hand, was balanced by the final division of the wards. Sokes of all kinds ceased to exist. The suburbs were benefited by the extension of city privileges and city order. The completion of the new bridge led eventually to the incorporation of Southwark, and its enrolment among "wards without." But all these changes and reforms required time. Trade was increasing, and with it a wider distribution of the wealth which had previously been in the hands of a few. The king insisted chiefly that order should be preserved : and the first years of his reign were passed without any serious infringement of the civic liberties.

Under the year 1284 we have for the first time the names of the members sent to represent London in a parliament. The king had summoned the estates of the realm to meet him at Shrewsbury. The city sent six men, namely, the Mayor Waleys and his friend Rokesley (of whose history we shall have much to say), with Philip

Cissor (or "the Tailor"), Ralf Crepyn, Jocele (or Jocelyn) le Acatour (or "the Buyer"), and John of Gisors.* They sat in judgment on David, the brother of the last prince of Wales, and, as the chronicle grimly adds, they carried his head back with them to London. Before the year was out, one of them, Ralf Crepyn, was wounded in Cheap, as before narrated, when the strange murder of Laurence Duket was perpetrated.† As no returns to the writs of parliament of this early period are known to exist, these names are well worth recording. The legislative measures of Edward's reign were of the utmost importance in moulding the future destinies of the city, and both in the codification of the old laws and the regulations now framed for the action of the hundreds, London was interested. The statute known as *Quia Emptores*, in particular, may be named as having had a direct influence on the development of civic institutions. Every district was now held responsible for crimes committed within its bounds: the system of compurgation which had been in force in London for so many generations, in short, now became universal. "The gates of each town were ordered to be shut at night; and all strangers were required to give an account of themselves to the magistrates of any borough which they entered."‡ In London, the order which Edward elsewhere enforced was frequently endangered. The tragedy of Duket did not stand alone: similar tumults were not infrequent. We do not read of any such oppressions as those of Edward's father; but it may have seemed necessary to the orderly mind of the "Greatest of the Plantagenets," as he

* The names are given in the 'Chronicle,' lately published by Canon Stubbs in the Rolls Series ('Annales Londonienses,' Introduction, xxxiii.).

† See above, chap. iv. p. 93.

‡ Green, 'English People,' i. 335.

has been sometimes rather vaguely called, that a stronger power than that of annually elected magistrates should watch the transitional course of events in the city: especially as Edward's warlike aspirations rendered the peace of so large and wealthy a place more than ever necessary. He made a vehement attempt to subject it to the system of assize visitation which he had perfected, and when, on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul (29th June), 1285, the justices in Eyre (*iter*) sat at the Tower, they summoned the mayor to give an account of the peace of the city.

It so happened that London was just then under the rule of two remarkable men, of both of whom I have already spoken. Gregory Rokesley and his friend Henry le Waleys,* or Galeys, had, one or other, held the mayoralty from the time of Walter Hervey's suppression, in which they were so largely concerned. Hervey's successor as Alderman of Cheap was Stephen Aswy,† who must have been a mere creature of Rokesley. There does not appear to have been any rivalry between Waleys and Rokesley, but sometimes one, and sometimes the other, would hold office for a year or two. They had been sheriffs together in the reign of the king's father. Waleys traded in wine, and Rokesley also had great foreign dealings, being both a goldsmith and also a wool merchant. In their benefactions to the Grey Friars they were rivals. Waleys built a portion of

* Rokesley's family was long seated at Rokesley, a village in Kent, which gives its name to the hundred, though it is now a mere hamlet and was united in 1557 to North Cray. The Italian origin of the family is extremely doubtful. See Hasted's 'Kent,' vol. ii. 51, and Thorne's 'Environs,' i. 129; also 'Arch. Cant.', vol. ii. Gregory's heir was his nephew, Roger Rislepe, who seems to have assumed the name of Rokesley. Henry le Waleys was probably a Gascon by birth.

† Mr. Stubbs in his 'Chronicles' (p. xxvi.) spells the name Ascwy.

the church, where now stands Christ Church in Newgate Street. Rokesley made the dormitories of the friars, where is now the Blue Coat School. They were, in short, typical examples of the traditional London merchant prince, enormously wealthy, benevolent in an ostentatious way, impatient of interference from the commons, and yet imbued with lofty ideas of the greatness, freedom, and privileges of the city which they practically ruled between them during the first dozen years of Edward's reign. But their attention was too much divided by the nature of their business and by public employments for it to be possible they could govern London adequately. Both were in attendance on the king in Gascony in 1273, and the mayoralty was in the hands of deputies. In the following year Rokesley was on an embassy in Flanders, and in 1275 Waleys was mayor of Bordeaux. The sheriffs were not above suspicion, as we have seen in Laurence Duket's case. Burglaries, murders, and the escape of prisoners were events of daily occurrence. Young men of the older families broke out into debauchery. An example was made of one of them, but too many escaped with impunity. The execution of Michael Thovy,* only checked this spirit of disorder for the moment. Justice was done by fits and starts as the mayor had time to attend to the duties of his office. A raid upon coiners and clippers was marked by the wholesale execution of nearly three hundred Jews. On this occasion Edward's judges visited the city and sat in the Guildhall: but the king determined at last to get London more completely into his own personal control. When Rokesley was mayor for the eighth time, the judges were sent to hold their assizes

* He was probably son of a citizen of the same name who had been sheriff and even warden under Henry III.

at the Tower as I have said, and they summoned him before them to give an account of the peace of the city.

Although a small part of the Tower precinct was within the imaginary boundary formed by the old Roman wall, it was wholly without the liberties of the city. Close to the border stood, and stands, the old church of Allhallows, distinguished from other churches of the same dedication by its connection with the great Abbey of Barking, a few miles farther down the river beyond the Tower. Here, no doubt, from the days of good St. Erkenwald, came the Lady Abbess,* whenever she had business in London, with her bailiff, her chamberlain, her treasurer, her chaplain, and other attendants, and landing at her private wharf, heard mass in the church before proceeding farther into town.

On this fateful 29th June, the mayor put on his robes at the house in Milk Street, which he had long rented from the Prior of Lewes,—one of the first private houses we hear of as standing in the market place—and prepared to obey the summons. Followed by his sheriffs and the aldermen in full civic procession, he passed along Cheapside, by the great cistern his friend Waleys had that very year filled with water from the distant Tyburn, and threading the narrow lanes to Tower Street he dismounted at “Berkyngechurche.” A commodious vestry-room for the use of the Lady Abbess adjoined the church, and entering it Rokesley divested himself of his robes of office, took the seal ring of the city off his finger, and the chain off his neck, and handed them to Stephen Aswy. Then he went out through the postern, over the little drawbridge, and so to the Tower, and came

* The Abbess of Barking ranked, like the Abbesses of Wilton, Shaftesbury, and St. Mary’s at Winchester, as a baroness of the realm. She was very frequently a princess of the blood, and seldom less than the daughter or sister of a peer.

into the presence of the judges,* “not as mayor † but as one of the aldermen, and neighbour of the citizens before mentioned,” as if he was an ordinary individual coming as compurgator of some one who lived in his ward. The judges, incensed at this behaviour, asked what he meant. Rokesley must have been a bold man. He answered bravely that the city of London was not bound to send to the Tower to hold its inquests, nor was it bound to make any appearance for judgment beyond its own liberties. A judge of assize on the bench is not, even in these days, approached without much deference: and in the reign of the stern Edward, the treasurer John de Kirkby, ‡ sitting actually within the royal fortress, deeply resented such language, though he must have known that he was acting as we should say unconstitutionally, only that the British Constitution of which we hear so much nowadays had not then been discovered.

Rokesley seems to have quietly retired,§ but the next day, attending with the citizens on Edward at Westminster, he and a large number of the principal persons were placed under arrest, and those who had been with him at Barking Church were actually imprisoned for a few days. Aswy, to whom he had delivered his chain and ring, was not let out so soon as the rest.|| Mean-

* They probably sat in a hall near the gate.

† ‘*Liber Albus*,’ Riley’s Translation, p. 15.

‡ He was Bishop of Ely, and the first, as we shall see (vol. ii. 184), to inhabit Ely Place in Holborn. He may be commemorated in the name of Kirby Street.

§ There is great difficulty in piecing together the few notes we have of this event. I have endeavoured here to make the narrative straightforward, but the reader is referred for the official account to the Record Series, ‘*Liber Albus*,’ i. 16.

|| This exception is mentioned in the ‘*Liber Albus*.’ Aswy was alive and at liberty in 1291, but died soon after and was succeeded as alderman by “Joh’s Blound,” according to Lansdowne MSS. 558, fo. 204. Blund became mayor in 1301.

while, on the clever plea that the city had been found without a mayor, it was "taken into the king's hands," and Sir Ralf de Sandwich was appointed to exercise the duties of the mayoralty under the name of warden.

Apart from the immediate causes of this course of action, Edward may have been influenced by several considerations which are but dimly hinted at in contemporary history. He may have feared that the influence of Rokesley and Waleys was becoming too great and that a new oligarchy of wealth was being gradually established in the place of the old oligarchy of the landowners. The craft guilds had now attained a position which made their recognition and regulation a necessity. The wards of the city required to be defined and limited. The landing-places along the river's bank were out of repair, and so filthy that no well-dressed person could pass from his boat into Thames Street without risk of contamination. The king himself, with the great schemes he was nourishing of bringing the whole island of Britain under his government, could not allow anything like disorder in its principal city. Sir Ralf de Sandwich showed indefatigable activity. He put everything into military order. Yet he always acted with the advice and co-operation of the aldermen, and the annual election of the sheriffs went on as usual. The king, in short, only appointed the warden as a permanent mayor, and did not in any other way infringe the liberties of the citizens.

At this period the city records commence to be regularly kept, and their publication, in part at least, under the editorship of the late Henry Thomas Riley, has both revealed the sources from which Stow made the collections which have immortalised him, and also enabled us to correct his account and to form our own opinion as to the course of events. Whether the keeping of records

was one of the new regulations or only the extension of an ancient custom we cannot tell, but it is impossible not to connect it with various other civic changes, reforms, and improvements introduced during the twelve years of the mayor's eclipse.*

Foremost among them was the definition and naming of the wards. The year 1290 is celebrated in the annals of England for the passing of the famous statute known from its opening words as "*Quia Emptores*."† By it certain feudal restrictions on the subdivision of land were removed, and the increase of manors was checked. The influence of the new statute on the geography of London is at once apparent when we note that about the same time the list of wards became substantially what it remains to the present day. One of the earliest collections of city records‡ contains a very curious list of aldermen and their respective wards which must be assigned to this year 1290. It is simply headed "The names belonging to the wards of the city of London, with the names of the aldermen."§ Its insertion shows that some arrangement or rearrangement had just been made, and this is further evident from another list,|| written some thirty

* In 1288 and part of the following year Sir John de Bretton was warden, Sandwich being probably in attendance on the king abroad. Sir Ralf was second son of Sir Simon de Sandwich, of Preston in Kent ('*Archæologia Cantiana*,' v. 190).

† The Third Statute of Westminster. Green, '*History of the English People*,' i. 335.

‡ Letter Book A, fo. 116. I am indebted to Dr. Sharpe of the Town Clerk's office for the discovery of this list. It was very incorrectly printed by Maitland (i. 105), who referred it to the '*Liber Albus*.' Mr. Riley had seen it, but does not seem to have been aware of its importance. He dates it "about 1292," I presume because Gregory Rokesley is mentioned in it. But Rokesley died on the 13th July, 1291 ('*Arch. Cant.*,' ii. 234). I should mention that Dr. Sharpe is inclined to date it as early as 1287.

§ "*Nomina propria Wardarum civitatis Lond. et nomina Aldermannorum*."

|| Lansdowne MSS. 558.

years later, in which the aldermen named in the first list are the earliest of whom the writer apparently has any knowledge. From 1290 it should be possible to construct a complete list of the rulers of each ward.

The twenty-five councillors who advised the mayor in the reign of King John had gradually become identified with the aldermen: and this title, which at first was applied to the heads of trade guilds and other functionaries, was henceforth confined to the rulers of the wards.* The city was parcelled out into twenty-four divisions. Each division was to elect its alderman, except Portsoken of which the Prior of Aldgate was *ex officio* alderman. There are many signs in other wards that the old hereditary system was long in dying out, and the aldermanry of Farringdon, which then comprised both the modern wards of that name, continued to be vested in William Farringdon, who had bought it, and his son Nicholas, for no less than eighty-two years. Their rent was the presentation of a gillyflower annually at Easter. Nevertheless, election now became the rule, and hereditary succession the exception; and, but that two of the larger wards were afterwards divided, no important change has since been made in their number or name.†

* It has been suggested that the twenty-five councillors came from the twenty-five wards, but a chronological arrangement of the facts disposes of this idea. There were not twenty-five wards then in existence—moreover, it would be necessary to account for twenty-six, if the mayor is reckoned.

† These two lists present a few curious variations. In 1290 Langborn is called "Langford." By 1320 it has obtained its present name. Broad Street is called "Lodyngeberye." It is "Brade strete" in the later list. Before each name in the older list is the word *Warda*, until we come to "Portsokne" which is without it. We therefore err in speaking of the "ward of Portsoken," but we might say the "Soke of the Port." Aldgate is Alegate in the earlier list, and Algate in the later. Our modern form is

Sir Ralf de Sandwich's activity showed itself in other ways. It may be worth while to look into the old minute books of the corporation and examine a few of the entries which relate to this period, for they give us some of the earliest contemporary notices of London life.*

On Friday, the feast of St. Margaret the Virgin (20th July), in 1291, for example, we find Sir Ralf inquiring as to the condition of the bridge over the Wallbrook at Bucklersbury. He had previously made a very stringent order as to the cleansing of the course of the stream, from where it entered the city, close to the modern site of the three railway stations in Liverpool Street, to the Thames at Dowgate. The bridge, which was close to St. Mildred's Church, at the eastern end of Cheapside, was in a dangerous state. It had been repaired many years before by "the then improver of the city," Walter Hervey, who had charged the cost against the occupiers of four adjacent houses, probably those which stood at the four corners of the bridge. One of them was the old mansion of the Bukerels, from

certainly wrong, and never occurs in ancient documents. If it did we should have it as "eald," or "old," as in the case of "Ealdstrete," which survives as Old Street. Certain wards were called after trades, which shows the growing influence of the guilds. Bread Street, Vintry, and Cordwainer Street are among them. Cheap is called "Warda Fori," and Queenhithe "Ripa Regine." Farringdon obtains its modern name in 1320, but in 1290 is called "Warda de Lodgate et Neugate." The bishop has surrendered his hold on "Cornhulle," which has become a ward and is ruled by Martin Box. Baynard's Castle has an alderman, one of the Aswys, and the name of Lord Fitzwalter does not occur. There must, however, have been some question as to the position of the bishop's soke, for in 1320 it is omitted from the list (Lansdowne MSS. 558, fo. 204. "*Nomina Aldermannorum London. post ultimatū jter justic. apud Turrim London.*"). Fitzwalter's claim was not finally disposed of till 1347.

* Riley's 'Memorials,' p. 25, &c.

whom the district was named. Another had belonged to Richard "de Walebroke." There were four stones in ancient times to mark these tenements, but Harvey took them away to widen the road. No doubt, things of this kind were no longer dependent on such primitive arrangements, but had begun to find their way into writing. "Certain men" of the adjacent wards were now put upon oath as a jury, and found that the tenants of these houses were bound to keep the bridge in repair and the sheriffs were accordingly ordered to see it done.

In ascertaining the duties to be paid on certain kinds of goods two public weighing machines were used. Of the "small beam," as one of them was called, we have a curious notice under this same year 1291. It appears that a certain citizen called Imgram de Betoyme had, at the request of Queen Eleanor, been appointed custodian of the "beam" for his life. It probably stood by the river-side in the ward of Queenhithe, a ward called from the old landing-place which had belonged to Eleanor, the mother of King John, and which, in 1246, had been leased by her heir, Richard, earl of Cornwall, to the city at fifty pounds a year, with sixty shillings to the hospital of St. Giles. When Imgram died, the warden and aldermen promptly put William de Betoyme, who was probably his son, into the office. William was himself alderman of the ward, and it may be believed that the custody of the "beam" was lucrative. Meanwhile, Jacobina la Lumbard, a lady of whom we have no further knowledge, obtained from King Edward, who was then at Berwick-upon-Tweed, a letter, dated 28th June, in which he requested the warden and aldermen to give her the keeping of the "small beam." To which they sent a reply stating respectfully that they had given the place away already and could not comply with the king's wishes. From Jacobina's

name we should judge her to have been a money-lender, whom the king would willingly have paid at the expense of the city; but it is to be observed that he did nothing illegal or oppressive in the matter, and that his nominee, Sandwich, identified himself completely with the governing body in their reply.

An amusing incident occurred a month later, and is duly entered in the records.* Roger de Portlaunde, who was clerk to the sheriff, occupying a position analogous to that of sub-sheriff in our own day, was a gentleman who entertained very strict notions as to his own dignity as the representative when in his court of the sheriff, and through him of the warden, and through the warden of "our lord the king" himself. On a certain Thursday in July, Portlaunde was holding the sheriff's court, when Robert de Suttone "cast vile contempt upon him." Suttone's contempt was expressed by repetitions of a syllable which the chronicler spells as "Tprhurt" or "Tphurpt," "to his damnifying, and in manifest contempt of our lord the king." Portlaunde had refused him leave to plead in the court on account of some previous offence, and Suttone had vented his discontent by these utterances, which Portlaunde with evident effort endeavours to spell for the benefit of the warden and the aldermen.† Suttone, whatever his moral shortcomings, understood the rhetorical value of the direct negative, and wholly denied the truth of the deputy sheriff's complaint. But when Savage the armourer, and Marescalle the surgeon, and German de St. Giles, and Goddard the attorney, and other reputable citizens had been formed into a jury, they found that Robert de Suttone

* Riley, p. 27, from Letter-book A, fo. 96.

† The syllable also appears in a political song, printed in the Camden Society's volume by Wright, p. 223.

had said in full court that he cared nothing for all the forbidding of Roger, and "still further speaking in manifest contempt, he uttered these words in English 'Tphurpt, Tphurt.'" He was accordingly committed to prison.

In another note we are told of the election of three citizens to be killers of swine "found wandering in the king's highway, to whomsoever they might belong, within the walls of the city and the suburbs." A night fair, or "evecheping," as it was called, in Soper Lane, was put down in 1297, "by reason of the murders and strifes arising therefrom." In the same year new regulations were made as to the guarding of the city gates. Edward I. was anxious to go to war with France, and though he was restrained by his councillors, and by the breaking out of Wallace's rebellion in Scotland, London was placed in a state of defence. During this year, indeed, news must constantly have reached London of the atrocities committed in the north of England by the Scottish freebooter, and "could not but have filled the English with horror something akin to that which the English in India must have felt at the outbreak of the Mutiny."* Many Londoners were in the army which Wallace defeated at Stirling† in 1298, including a canon of St. Paul's, Sir Hugh de Cressingham,‡ who was among the slain, and whose body the savage Scots flayed. The story even came to London that Wallace himself had a sword-belt made of the skin.

* Bright, 'English History,' i. 189.

† 'French Chronicle' (ed. Riley), 244.

‡ He is not mentioned by Newcourt, unless he may be identified with Hugh de Kersington, who was prebendary of Neasden about this time. Aungier, in a note, speaks of him on the authority of Prynne as Canon of St. Paul's and "an insatiable pluralist." He was Treasurer of Scotland.

Meanwhile, the king, who probably was in great want of money, offered to restore their mayor to the citizens of London on payment of a fine of 23,000 marks. Henry Waleys stepped at once, as if naturally, into the office, and everything went on without a break. John le Breton had been warden for the four last years of this period of sequestration. Following the mayor's restoration was the grant of a charter in which it was arranged that for the future in case of the absence of the king and his court from Westminster the mayor should be admitted at the Tower by the constable.

The impression made in London by Wallace's rebellion must have been very strong. All the chronicles speak with horror of his atrocities. He "destroyed Northumbarlond and brent and robbet it, and kylded both man and womon and chyldryn that lay in cradylls, and brent also holy chyrche," says one of them.* In consequence of these crimes Scotland was placed under an interdict; "all the world spake of the wykkesnesse that thai diddyn throghe crystendome." The terror inspired by these stories was not lessened by an earthquake which occurred in January 1299. At length the king crushed the rebels in the terrible slaughter at Falkirk, and when Wallace himself was taken he was sent to London for execution. He arrived on the 22nd of August, 1305, and having been lodged for a night at a private house in Fenchurch Street, he was duly hanged and beheaded on the 23rd, to the great satisfaction of an immense throng of the citizens, to whom he appeared as the Nana Sahib of his time. The next three years witnessed the deaths by the same process of Simon Fraser, Herbert Morham, Thomas Boys, the Earl of

* Egerton MSS., quoted by Aungier. 'Fr. Chron.' p. 25.

Athol, two brothers of Robert Bruce, and a brother of William Wallace, all of whom were sent to London for execution.*

These scenes, horrible as they appear to us, were probably thought very proper at that time. We have already seen how the Jews were treated. In 1264, not fewer than 500 of them were massacred, and the Jewry burnt. Yet we do not read that any one was punished for this atrocity. In 1279, as mentioned above, 293 Jews were hanged for clipping the coin. The chronicle is so precise as to the number that we cannot doubt an execution of the most shocking character must have been carried out, a judicial massacre, in fact. A few years later we read that "all the Jews of England were taken and imprisoned and put to ransom." This was in 1287. They had objected to a tallage, laid upon them by the king's mere motion, no doubt, for the Jews were reckoned as royal chattels, and all they had was his. It was said that they paid 12,000*l.* to appease the king's indignation on this occasion, and if we remember that at this time a good lamb could be bought for 6*d.* and a goose for 4*d.* the amount appears prodigious. But the respite thus purchased did not last long. Edward wanted a grant of a fifteenth from his subjects in 1290, and his subjects, on the other hand, prayed him to expel the Jews from the realm altogether. After some hesitation, due no doubt to the fact that the Jewries of some of the large towns were a source of regular revenue as well as an always ready scene for irregular exactions, he

* The writer of 'The Greatest of the Plantagenets,' p. 315, somewhat strangely remarks upon Edward's clemency in only hanging one Scot. But seven at least besides are mentioned in all the contemporary chronicles. The same apologist carefully, and perhaps wisely, avoids all mention of the expulsion of the Jews.

consented. They were accordingly ordered to quit the kingdom between the first of August and the first of November, or as an alternative to become Christians. Notwithstanding the unattractive side of Christianity which must have been presented to the Jewish mind by the transactions of the past few years, there seems reason to believe that a considerable number did embrace the Cross.* "Of the sixteen thousand who preferred exile to apostacy," says Mr. Green,† "few reached the shores of France. Many were wrecked, others robbed and flung overboard. One shipmaster turned out a crew of wealthy merchants on a sandbank and bade them call a new Moses to save them from the sea." The Jews' quarter in London still retains its name; but when the race was permitted to return in Cromwell's time the new Jewry was at Aldgate, on the site of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, and to this day large numbers of Jews congregate at the same place.

In the reign of Edward we have the first distinct mention of the modern Livery Companies. The king's second marriage and the victory which delivered England from the fear of Wallace occurred so nearly together that we are not surprised to find that the double occasion was celebrated in an unusual manner. On Edward's first visit to the city after these events a magnificent pageant was organised, and every citizen according to his trade took part in it.‡ The fishmongers especially dis-

* A hospital for converted Jews had been established in the previous reign. When converted Jews grew scarce it became as it is still, the Rolls Court. By the revolutions of time it chanced that the late master of this house was himself a Jew, but unconverted.

† i. 341.

‡ Herbert, i. 89. The date cannot have been 1298, as the battle of Falkirk was fought on 22nd July, 1300.

tinguished themselves, a figure of St. Magnus,* on whose day the procession took place, forming the central feature of their show.

It has been asserted that Edward I. gave charters to some of the companies. The fishmongers, in particular, are named among those who were thus recognised, and their historian, Herbert, mentions the fact vaguely. No such charter has, however, been preserved. It is true that Edward I. recognised the existence of the fishmongers, but only to censure them for misconduct in their trade. Nevertheless we can have no doubt that during the whole of this reign the companies were gradually attaining to a more perfect system of organisation, and though still unchartered were already engaged in making regulations for the conduct of their respective misteries.†

Edward of Carnarvon appears on the city records before the death of his father as obtaining for one of his servants, Thomas de Kent, who had been serjeant to the mayor, the custody of the gate-house of Cripplegate, on condition that he was "to well and honestly behave himself, and keep the said gate roofed at his own expense and protected from wind and rain."‡ Thomas was very soon afterwards promoted to some other civic office, it does not very clearly appear what, but letters from both Edward II. and his favourite, Gavestone, remain in the records § recommending one Albon, who had been Gavestone's "vadlet," for the post, together with the city reply that it was already given to Kent. These are only

* Two days, April 16 and August 19, are assigned to St. Magnus in the calendar. There is considerable difficulty about assigning a date to this procession: it may have taken place in honour of the king's marriage in 1299.

† There can be no doubt that this word originates in "master," or as we pronounce it "mister," not in mystery.

‡ Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 59.

§ Riley, pp. 69, 70.

examples of numerous similar requests on the new king's part, and it was not until long after that the citizens perceived that the more they granted the more he would ask. In 1310 he wanted them to give one Richard de Redyng the "small beam," of which we have already heard, and in this request he was joined by his wife. It was granted, and we find indeed that queen Isabella was always a favourite with the city. Her opposition to the king's foreign minions, and the strength of her character as compared with his, gave her a certain ascendancy. When the son who was afterwards to be Edward III. was born, in 1312, she sent a messenger from Windsor to apprise the mayor, aldermen and commonalty, "forasmuch as we believe you would willingly hear good tidings of us." An amusing transaction ensued.* The queen's messenger was her tailor, John of Falaise, and he attended in the city on the 16th November, to make the pleasing announcement. But the mayor and aldermen had received the news the day before from one Robert Oliver, and had illuminated the city in consequence. There were public rejoicings and a holiday, with high mass at St. Paul's a week later, and on the following day, the mayor, with the consent of the aldermen and commonalty, presented John of Falaise with ten pounds sterling and a silver cup, thirty-two ounces in weight. This magnificent present—the money alone would come to at least 200*l.* in our reckoning—did not satisfy the queen's tailor. He sent it back. The mayor seems to have taken no further steps in the matter, and John of Falaise, no doubt, ultimately repented of having "cut off his nose to vex his face."

In 1312 an attempt to extend the fortifications of the Tower had led to a serious outbreak, and in 1313,

* Riley, p. 105.

Edward II. had attempted to tax the city as if it were "in demesne."* But the citizens objecting and offering a considerable sum by way of loan, he was induced to be satisfied for the time. A heavy tallage was laid on the people, and a list of pledges for the unpaid assessment occurs in the Letter-book two years later.† The whole history of this unhappy king's dealings with the city shows him to have been a worthy grandson of their greatest oppressor, Henry III., and in the contests that ensued between him and his queen, the citizens warmly espoused her cause and contributed largely by their support to her ultimate victory. In addition to the troubles caused by bad government, two years of great scarcity, owing to heavy rains,‡ followed, of course, by a pestilence, increased the discontent of the citizens. Rioting broke out on very small provocation, and even the sanctity of the cathedral church was invaded on one occasion by the mob, which insulted a certain Lombard who had been in the company of the pope's nuncio. When one of the confederated barons, Bartholomew de Badlesmere, offended the queen by refusing her admission to Leeds Castle, in Kent, on her way back from a pilgrimage to Canterbury, the citizens joined the king in exacting vengeance, and having taken the castle, hanged the governor.§ These proceedings, although the king was concerned in them, were probably carried out rather on behalf of the queen; and the citizens refused, when Edward had recalled his favourites, to give him any assistance whatever.

The city meanwhile fell into great disorder. John Wengrave, by underhand means, kept the mayoralty

* Allen, p. 98.

† Riley, p. 108.

‡ In 1315 the rains lasted, we are told, from Pentecost to Easter.

§ French Chron.' p. 251.

§ Sir Thomas Culpeper.

for three years, during which he "did much evil to the commons." A new charter confirming various privileges having been promised, the mayor and the people quarrelled over the terms to be introduced, and we read * that the commons were victorious and provided certain points, "a thing that was much against the will of the said John, the mayor." What these points were we know not, but it is evident that "the times were out of joint" in the city. Edward's second charter was granted in consequence of the Leeds Castle incident, and acknowledged that citizens should not be called upon to serve in war beyond the civic boundaries. "It has been treated as a document of great importance." †

There is some difficulty in unravelling the events of the last few years of Edward's reign. The citizens were strong partizans, and opposed the Despencers with all their might. Popular outbreaks occurred frequently. Obnoxious persons were seized and beheaded or hanged by armed mobs. The king made and unmade mayors. Hamo de Chikewell, or Chigwell, appears to have been a rival of Nicholas Farringdon, and to have supported the king's side. Farringdon, a goldsmith, and enormously wealthy, was of course in himself a host to the queen's faction. In the confusion we read of escapes from Newgate, of murders, robberies and street fights, of conspiracies and executions, and, in short, of all possible evidences of bad government. In 1320, Nicholas Farringdon was mayor, when the king, on a trumped-up charge, made, not against Farringdon, but against one of his pre-

* 'French Chron.' (Riley), p. 252.

† Aungier, 'French Chron.' p. 43. Mr. Stubbs ('Chronicles,' p. lxxviii.) speaks of the "bitter quarrel between the mayor and citizens." The mayor was summoned in 1319 before the regent, in the chapter-house of St. Paul's, and peremptorily commanded to make peace with the commons.

decessors in office, seized the city and deposed the mayor. Chigwell was appointed at last and remained in office during the following year, which was otherwise marked by the expedition against Thomas, earl of Lancaster, many of whose adherents were put to death in the city. London sent the king a hundred fully armed soldiers for his disastrous invasion of Scotland, and was proportionately disgusted at his miserable failure. His victim, earl Thomas, was, by contrast, canonised in the minds of the people, who had to be restrained by order of the king (June 1323), from worshipping at a tablet which he had set up in St. Paul's. Miracles were wrought there, and another St. Thomas was said to have arisen for the special protection of London.*

Meanwhile, the king turned Chigwell out and put Far-
rington in his place, while Chigwell and some other citizens were called upon to attend the court in its wanderings, perhaps as councillors, but more probably as hostages. Mortimer had escaped from the Tower and fled to Flanders, and the king was much displeased with the citizens, who were not unreasonably suspected of having favoured his escape. The queen, under pretence of making peace between France and England, also withdrew from the realm, and before long was joined by the young "Sir Edward de Wyndsores," her son. Chigwell was now mayor again, not by election, but merely on the king's nomination, and in 1326 a proclamation was made in the city that no Frenchman should be allowed to trade in England. At the same time the queen's lands were seized, she was put on "wages" at twenty shillings a day, and finally, her title

* Queen Isabella endeavoured to obtain the pope's acknowledgment of his sanctity, but failed. See 'Memorials of the Savoy,' 34-36, for further particulars.

of queen was taken from her, and she appears for a while in the chronicle as "the lady Isabele."

This miserable condition of public affairs is marked by many entries in the records. The city was perambulated by bands of marauders, "the ancestors of the Mohawks of queen Anne's days."* Some of the new associations of workmen fell out, and street-fighting ensued between the saddlers and the joiners. The joiners obtained assistance from the lorimers† and from the painters, and there was a pitched battle in Cripplegate. The efforts of the mayor, moreover, were not sufficient to keep the people from showing sympathy with the cause of the queen,‡ and great satisfaction was expressed when one of her strongest partisans, Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, took up the freedom of the city. He may have been connected with London by birth, as his name would import. He signalised the occasion by giving some lead for the repair of Guildhall Chapel, and the record of this gift is the last entry under the reign of the unfortunate Edward II.

Isabella and her "gentle Mortimer" had been in constant correspondence with their friends in England, and especially in London. The city chronicler records with sympathy, under the year 1325, § that she wore the garments of widowhood. The common people, he says, greatly pitied her. At length news came that she had landed at Harwich, with her son and the Mortimer, "to

* Stubbs, p. lxxxvii.

† Who made bits and other objects in iron and in copper.

‡ Mr. Stubbs ('Chronicles,' p. lxxxvi.) suggests that the fishmongers and pepperers took different sides. John de Gisors, in whose mill Mortimer took refuge on his escape from the Tower, was a pepperer. Chigwell was a fishmonger.

§ 'French Chron.,' p. 49. "En cele temps la reyne usa simple appaille come dame de dolour qe avoit son seignour perdue."

destroy the enemies of the land." She was anxious at the first to be assured of a welcome in London, and forwarded a letter to the commons, to which however no answer was returned, "through fear," we are told, "of the king." Chigwell was naturally desirous to check the enthusiasm of the people, but when the queen sent a proclamation denouncing Hugh le Despencer, and the king's advisers in general, her letter was fixed at day-break upon the cross in Cheap, and copies were exhibited in the windows. The mayor was in despair. He retired to the house of the Black Friars, but the commons went thither for him and forced him to come to the Guildhall "crying mercy with clasped hands." There they speedily obliged him to make a proclamation banishing from the city the enemies of "the king and queen and their son," and not content with this evidence of their devotion, they attacked the house of John Marshall, an adherent of the Despercens, who lived by the Wallbrook, broke into it, seized the unfortunate man, and led him into the market-place, where without further ceremony they cut off his head.

A nobler victim was at hand. Walter Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, and formerly treasurer under the Despercens, had, in addition to the Outer Temple, a house in Old Dean's Lane.* He was among those proscribed by the reluctant mayor; but knowing nothing of the revolution which was taking place a few yards off, he rode into the city to his hostel to dine.† The mob, having wreaked their fury on the unhappy Marshall, had only to turn round when they beheld the bishop fleeing

* Eldedeaneslane ('French Chron.,' p. 52), afterwards Warwick Lane, led out of Newgate Street, opposite the house of the Grey Friars.

† Mr. Aungier gives a somewhat different account of this tragedy in a note, p. 53. But the story in the chronicle is very simple and circumstantial

for sanctuary to St. Paul's. But they intercepted him, tore him from his horse, and dragged him into the Cheap, where, on ground still wet with the blood of Marshall, they cut off his head, and left his body lying while they sought for two of his servants, William Walle and John of Paddington. Walle made a stout defence and had nearly escaped, but was captured on the bridge, and speedily shared the fate of his master, while Paddington, who, as steward of the bishop's manor, as it was called, outside Temple Bar, had made himself particularly obnoxious, was despatched on the same spot.

Towards evening the choirmen of St. Paul's ventured forth, and raising the headless body of the bishop, bore it into their church ; but the commons gave them to understand that "he had died under sentence," or, in other words, as a traitor, and they, terrified, conveyed the corpse to his parish church, St. Clement Danes, close to his suburban house.* But the people there were as unwilling to receive it as the citizens, and it was cast out with that of William Walle. At length, "certain women and persons in the most abject poverty took the body, which would have been quite naked had not one woman given a piece of old cloth to cover the middle, and buried it in a place apart without making a grave, and his esquire near him, without any office of priest or clerk."† Eventually, about six months later, when a settled government had again been established, the bishop's body was conveyed to the cathedral church of his see and duly interred with

* Exeter House adjoined the modern Essex Street.

† Riley's 'French Chron.,' p. 263. Walsingham says the body was thrown into the river. The two stories are not absolutely inconsistent. Godwin says the body was buried in a heap of sand at the back of the house. This must have been close to the water's edge, and there was, moreover, the little tidal creek commemorated in the modern Milford Lane.

the proper solemnities; and three years later the rioters of that fatal Wednesday were apprehended, and the ringleaders suffered the doom they had inflicted on Stapleton and his companions.

The Black Friars had warmly espoused the cause of Edward and the Despencers. Their newly-finished house by the riverside, at the extreme south-western corner of the old city wall, stood on the site of Montfitchett's Tower, of which mention has been made more than once already.* It must have been a fine building. Henry VI. afterwards held a parliament in the hall. But on the news of Bishop Stapleton's murder the friars fled, "seeing that the commonalty entertained great enmity against them by reason of their haughty carriage,"—"lour orgelousse port," as the chronicler calls it—"they not behaving themselves as friars ought:" and with them also fled Segrave, Bishop of London, and various other functionaries who might be suspected of friendship with the Despencers. The commons, making a rendezvous at the Leaden Hall on Cornhill, received there the constable of the Tower, who gave up to them various political prisoners, including John of Eltham, the king's second son, a mere child. The tablet of Thomas of Lancaster which the king had removed was replaced in St. Paul's: and, in short, for a month, the mob seem to have been masters of the whole city.

At length the queen's party sent Bishop Stratford to see how things were going on, and at Guildhall he was solemnly admitted to the franchise, and read letters from the queen and her son calling upon them to elect a mayor, Chigwell being described as not lawfully mayor,

* For some account of the introduction of the mendicant orders, see next chapter.

since he had been nominated, not by the people, but by the king. To this command they joyfully acceded, the right man having been carefully provided beforehand by the bishop. This was Richard de Bettoyne, who had suffered great persecution from the Despencers, and who was well known in the city, being, like Farrington, a goldsmith. He had just arrived from the queen, and was the next day sworn into office.

The rioting, however, went on as before. It is possible that the queen's party, even if they could have stopped it, found it a very easy way of disposing of their enemies. Arnold * of Spain, a wine merchant, for instance, was carried out, barefooted and half naked, to No Man's land,† where the Charterhouse now stands, and was there beheaded. News came daily from the west, where the Despencers and others of the king's party were being hanged, one by one, and Baldock, Bishop of Hereford, the chancellor, who was well known in London, having been prebendary of Vynesbury, or Finsbury, ‡ was taken in Wales with the king and was forwarded to the city, where he received such rough treatment on his way to Newgate that he died in a few days. His body was buried in St. Paul's.

This disorderly state of things continued for a whole year, during which the consistorial courts did not sit, nor did the mayor dare to hold his hustings. At the beginning of 1327, the timid Chigwell being once more mayor, the queen came to Westminster and parliament met. The city sent six representatives, two to sit, the others to be

* He is called "Bernard" in the 'French Chronicle,' and "Anthony" by Carte.

† Mentioned in Domesday Book ; see above, chap. iv.

‡ He let his manor to the corporation in 1315, on a lease which only expired in 1867, when it reverted to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's.

ready in case of need.* The Despensers and most of their friends had been slain, and the king was in ward in the Castle of Kenilworth. His deposition was speedily voted by the parliament,† the people loudly demanding “the Duke of Guyenne” for their king. Young Edward was but fourteen at the time, but as soon as the king had agreed to resign the crown, he was knighted and crowned (13th November), and immediately afterwards took the field against the Scots.

The Black Friars continued to intrigue for Edward II., and fell therefore into great disfavour at the time, besides precipitating his murder, which took place at Berkeley Castle, in Gloucestershire, the same year. Before many years were over he was looked upon as a martyr, his oppressions and vices forgotten, and the Black Friars reinstated in the public favour.

One of the young king's first acts was to grant a charter to the city. It considerably enlarged the privileges of the citizens. The mayor was constituted a justice of the gaol delivery at Newgate: he still takes his place beside the judge at the Old Bailey, and it is possible that this provision first gave rise to the alteration of his title into the modern form of “Lord” Mayor, though it did not come into ordinary use before the time of Richard III., as we shall have occasion to notice further on. The annual rent of the sheriffwicks of London and Middlesex‡ was fixed at 300*l.*, at which it has

* Their names were Gisors, Secheford, “de Conductu,” Leyre, Cōsyn, and Steere.

† It is interesting to observe that his temporary absence from the realm is assigned as a reason for his deposition. A similar reason may have governed the case of Richard II. as it certainly did that of James II.

‡ Norton (p. 346), says “the sheriffwick of London,” but the text of the charter is in a collection published in 1793, and is as above, the two being thus united.

remained ever since, having previously for some time, contrary to the ancient charter, been 400*l*. The mayor was further made "escheator" of lands and goods falling in by forfeiture, but this grant seems occasionally to have been resumed by the crown.* Finally the new charter forbade any market to be kept within seven miles of London, a prohibition, with certain modifications, still in force. In the same year a short charter relating to Southwark was also granted by the young king. The magistrates of London had been much annoyed by the frequent escape of "felons, thieves, and other malefactors and disturbers of the peace" into the "village" of Southwark. To prevent this source of trouble the said village was made over to the city in fee farm, to be accounted for by the bailiff or sheriff annually at the Exchequer, like the farms of London and Middlesex, the amount being at first fixed at 10*l*. Southwark was not however fully placed under the city jurisdiction till the reign of Edward IV. (1462), and was not made a "ward without" till the year 1550.†

With these concessions Edward III. commenced his long and glorious reign. A sort of golden mist hangs over it. We do not know as much about city politics under Edward III. as under Henry III. True, there was not so much to record. But we read of tournaments and processions, of gorgeous pageants and conduits running wine. Knights in harness clank over the pavement, and armorial banners float from the windows. There is fighting and feasting. Expeditions are fitted

* See the very curious story of the attempted suicide and subsequent death of Anthony Joyce, in Pepys's 'Diary,' vol. iii. 355, etc. (Bohn's edition).

† Sir John Ayloffe was the first alderman of the ward of Bridge Without ('Stow,' Thoms's edition, p. 156).

out, prisoners of war received into custody, ships built and cannon cast for presentation to the king. The old "Ya, Ya," of the folkmote is drowned in the blare of trumpets. It is the time of Froissart and of Chaucer : of the Black Prince and the first Knights of St. George : of the motherly Philippa and the Fair Maid of Kent. But with all this outward show of wealth and prosperity, there is contrasted the exhaustion produced by almost constant war, the frightful ravages of the plague, the disorders of the king's later years, the breakdown of morals, beside the immense increase of ecclesiastical endowments, the armies of friars and monks, and the hordes of mass priests. The London chronicler, who began with civic annals, with the hanging of thieves in Cheap, and the conflagration in Bread Street, now fills his concluding pages with the battle at Sluys, and the siege of Tournay.

The very first event recorded is typical. When the king was only sixteen years of age, Philippa of Hainault, who was still younger, came over to be his wife, and was received in London with the loudest acclamations of welcome. The commercial treaty with Flanders, of which this union was one result, made it popular with the traders ; and the young queen was conducted in gorgeous state through the city on her way to the north. The boy-king met her at York, and the wedding ceremony was made more joyful by the conclusion of peace with Scotland. The Londoners presented the bride 'with a service of plate worth 300*l*.'* When the newly-married couple arrived at Westminster they received a further present, which is carefully described in the records.† It reminds us of the present Jacob sent to

* Strickland's 'Lives of the Queens' (i. 547). Not very good authority.

† Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 170.

Joseph. To the king there went ten carcases of beeves, at the price of 7*l.* 10*s.* each, and twenty pigs for 4*l.*, these being bought of Nicholas Derman; also, twenty-four swans which cost 6*l.*, a like number of bitterns and herons, and ten dozen of capons, amounting in price to 6*l.* 14*s.*, these being bought of John Brid and John Scot. To the meat and fowls were added four barrels of sturgeon, which cost 12*l.*, six pike and six eels, which cost 10 marks, and five stone of wax, costing 19*l.* 19*s.* 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.*, which were bought of Hugh Medefrei. The queen's present was similar, but smaller in quantity, five carcases and a dozen pigs being thought sufficient, with pheasants, swans, pike, eels and sturgeon in proportion, and three stone of wax. The whole came to 95*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*, equal to about 3000*l.* of our money.

The boy-king and his wife came into the city after the birth of their eldest son, and a tournament was held in Cheap.* Edward, though he had already gone through a campaign and was already a father, cannot have been eighteen at the time. Yet we are told that when the scaffolding or stage, from which the queen and her ladies watched the tilting, fell down, he would have had the unfortunate carpenters that made it hanged, though no one was killed. The oldest version of this story hardly admits of the embellishments sometimes given to it.† The lists were set up between the cross and the conduit: that is, opposite Soper Lane, which is now

* This story, which has often been regarded as apocryphal, is given in the 'Chronicles' edited by Mr. Stubbs, p. 335, but without the incident of the queen's intercession. It is detailed by Stow, 'Annals,' p. 230. The tournament in Cheap, held in September 1331, may be this one.

† Thus Miss Strickland:—"When the young king saw the peril of his wife, he flew into a tempest of rage, and vowed that the careless carpenters who had constructed the building should instantly be put to death. Whether he would thus far have stretched the prerogative of an English sovereign," &c., &c., i. 550.

Queen Street. They were, therefore, close to St. Mary's, or Bow, Church, where we may suppose the market-place was widest. Stow says that the tournament lasted three days, that the wooden scaffold, "like unto a tower," stood across the street, and that a part of the structure, "the higher frame," broke in pieces, whereby the ladies "were with some shame forced to fall down, by reason whereof the knights and such as were underneath were grievously hurt." It does not appear from this that the queen was in any danger, or even that she fell, and the people below seem to have suffered only from the people above falling on their heads. He says nothing about the king ordering the carpenters to instant execution. On the contrary, the council seems to have sat on the case and to have thought seriously of prosecuting them; "wherefore," says Stow, "the queen took great care to save the carpenters from punishment, and through her prayers (which she made upon her knees) pacified the king and council, and thereby purchased great love of the people."

A tangible memorial of the tournaments in Cheap still exists. As we walk under the steeple of St. Mary's we may observe a window and balcony looking upon the street. From this balcony queen Anne is said to have seen a city procession in 1702, and it is alluded to, soon after it was built, in contemporary memoirs.* It is the successor of a stone building which Edward III. caused to be made on the north side of the old church in the place of the wooden "seld" or shed which had fallen down. Stow tells us that it "greatly darkeneth the said church, for by means thereof all the windows

* See Cunningham, under *Cheapside*. In the 'French Chron.,' p. 62, we read: "En cele an nostre joevene roy . . . à Caunterbury fit faire solempne joustes et puisse après à Loundres en Chepe."

and doors on that side are stopped up." Under it was the crownseld, afterwards leased to the Mercers.

Edward's revolt from the tutelage of his mother and Mortimer took place in 1330, when the Londoners, who had so warmly received the queen and her paramour a few years before, went out along the great western highway over Holborn Hill to see the earl of March hanged. Gallows were set up in a valley by a brook known as the Tyburn : * and here a few days later also suffered Mortimer's confidential adviser, Sir Simon Beresford.† Mortimer's body, by the special grace of the king, was interred in the church of the Grey Friars, now Christ Church, Newgate Street, where, after twenty-eight years, the body of the guilty queen was also laid, with the heart of Edward "her murdered mate," as if in mockery, in a gold vase upon her breast. Her son had always ignored the reports of his mother's connection with Mortimer. He always treated her with the highest respect. Castle Rising was assigned to her as her chief residence, but she was much at Leeds Castle—where the ghosts of the Badlesmeres should have haunted her, had she been susceptible of such impressions—and she died at Hertford Castle, which became afterwards the residence of her grandson, John of Gaunt. She spent enormous sums on jewelry. She entertained foreign ambassadors. She was much in London, where she hired a house in Lombard Street from the Prioress of St. Helen's, at the rent of 2*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.* a year. Here she received her son and his queen, her grandson, the Black Prince, and others of the royal family : and here she was constantly visited by the grandson of Mortimer, whom Edward III. had restored in blood and admitted to the earldom of

* For identification of the site, see vol. ii.

† Or Bereford.

March in 1354.* The stories of her confinement by her son, and of her long imprisonment and deep repentance, seem to have no foundation in fact.† On the contrary, we do not even see her lamenting long for Mortimer: the very winter of his death she attended in state the usual Christmas festivities at Windsor.

Meanwhile, Chigwell had fared but badly. He had endeavoured but too successfully to trim his course so as to appear to belong to both parties. In the abortive rising of Lancaster against Mortimer in 1329, he was deeply implicated. An inquiry set on foot by Mortimer found a suitable charge with which to commence the prosecution of Chigwell, who was accused of having connived in a felony. The abbot of Bury St. Edmund's had been robbed and abducted by a malefactor named Cotterell, a skinner, who was hanged for his misdeeds. Chigwell, it was alleged, had received two silver basins as his share of the abbot's property. He was convicted, and, in all probability, would have shared the fate of the unhappy skinner, had he not pleaded that he was in orders. This plea brought him under the jurisdiction of the bishop. It is possible that during his sojourn among the friars he had been admitted to minor orders, in anticipation of his declining years: for he must at this time have been already an aged man. The bishop, Stephen of Gravesend, who was himself under more or less suspicion, as he had refused to consent to the deposition of Edward II., was powerful enough, nevertheless to protect so munificent a churchman as Chigwell, and kept him for a while at his country-house at Orsett, in Essex. Early in the following year, deem-

* Beltz, 'Order of the Garter,' 41.

† They rest principally on some lines in Froissart. See 'Archæologia,' vol. xxxv., for an interesting paper relating to the "Last Days of Queen Isabella," by Mr. E. A. Bond.

ing himself out of danger, he ventured back to London and was warmly welcomed by his fellow-citizens, with whom Isabella and Mortimer were rapidly becoming unpopular. Mortimer immediately issued a writ for his apprehension, and he fled once more. Only his lifeless body returned, to be buried in the north aisle of the new cathedral.*

In 1338, Edward made his first expedition against France. In 1340, he won a great naval victory in which he derived, according to the London chroniclers, considerable assistance from a ship which belonged to William Hansard, who had been sheriff in 1333. The Londoners, in fact, were much interested in this war. Froissart specially commends their martial spirit, which seems to have impressed him so much that he reckons 24,000 men completely armed, and 30,000 archers, as being in the city and neighbourhood, an exaggeration probably born of what he saw of their conduct in the field, where, as he says, "the more blood is spilled, the greater is their courage." The records contain among other entries regarding the war one or two of interest, but the events of Edward's reign are very fully detailed by all the historians, and for my present purpose it is only necessary to refer in passing to the wars, and then go on to notice the newly-chartered companies, the regulation of trades, the enforcement of sanitary precautions, the sufferings of the people from famine and pestilence, the increase of ecclesiastical and monastic foundations, and many topographical points which do not concern the general history of England.†

In 1339, we find a list of the munitions of war pro-

* Stubbs, 'Chronicles,' p. lxxxiv.

† The details of Edward's foreign campaigns are very pleasantly given in Miss Yonge's 'Cameos.'

vided by the city. In the house called "La Bretaske," near the Tower, were stored cross-bows, with their "quarrels," and twenty-nine cords, "called *strenges*." At Alegate a similar store was made, and besides these a number of weapons had been lent to William Hansard for his ship, "La Seinte Mary Cogge." Besides these, there were laid up at the Guildhall six instruments of brass or *latone* "called *gonnes*," as well as "*peletæ de plumbo*," balls of lead, for the said instruments, of four-and-a-half pounds weight; and in addition thirty-two pounds of powder. These terrible weapons were probably imported* by the Bardi, a company of Italian merchants with whom Edward, and before him Mortimer and Isabella, had extensive dealings. Cannon had been used at the siege of Florence thirteen years earlier.

Another part of the city preparations consisted in putting the Thames into a state of defence, and the king, on each expedition, exhorted the citizens to this effect, and solemnly charged them with the preservation of peace in the city. When, in 1341, he had to raise the siege of Tournay, and suddenly returned home to obtain or hasten supplies, he sent first for the mayor and confided to him the task of apprehending the careless guardians on whom he had depended.† They were speedily taken, except Sir John de Molins. Edward's journey to St. Albans, and his seizure of Sir John's treasure in the keeping of the abbot, have been often described, and the punishment of the judges at Westminster belongs to a later chapter.‡ The mayor above mentioned was succeeded by John de Oxenford, who

* See a long and interesting note on the subject, Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 205. He misread "*vocata*" as "*vocitata*," in the MS.

† 'French Chron.' (Riley), p. 283. Andrew Aubrey, "three times mayor and member for the city in 1337," p. 275.

‡ See vol. ii., p. 53.

died in a few months, when Simon Franceis became mayor for the rest of his term and for the following year as well. Among other wealthy and eminent citizens of the period, John Pulteney, or Pountney, a draper, was remarkable for his munificence to the church, and was mayor in 1330, and in three other years, though he had never served the office of sheriff.* His magnificent house near Dowgate, the Cold Harbour, stood till 1600. When he died, in 1349, he was buried, like his predecessor, Chigwell, in St. Paul's. Another great merchant family bore the odd surname of Turk, of whom one, Walter Turk, fishmonger, was mayor in 1350. He lent money to the king, and is frequently mentioned in the city annals. In his epitaph, which long stood in the church of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, he is described in quaint rhymes as

“Audax, formosus, pulcher, cives animosus,
Pauperibus fomes, piscenarius, vice comes.”

This brave, handsome, beautiful and courageous citizen, the warmer of the poor, fishmonger and sheriff, was one of a large family of the same name, and died two years after his mayoralty. I have already mentioned Richard de Bettoyne, who was mayor in the year of Edward's coronation. A curious petition was made by him in 1338, the year of the outbreak of the French war. He was by trade a goldsmith, and represented the city in parliament, so that we may presume him to have been wealthy. But in his petition, which is addressed “To our lord the king, and his council,” he sets forth that he attended at the coronation as mayor, and performed the office of butler, with three hundred and sixty valets, each carrying a silver cup : but he complains that the

* Note in Aungier's edition of the ‘French Chron.,’ p. 64.

fee which he received from the king on this occasion, the fee, in fact, appended to that service, which was always a gold cup and cover, with a gold enamelled ewer, was made the subject of a charge from the exchequer. The sheriffs had been called upon to levy an estreat upon the goods and chattels of the said Richard, to the appalling amount of 89*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* We may be sure Edward did justice to his unfortunate petitioner : but the fact is not recorded.

Each of these great merchants, it will have been perceived, belonged to a company. In addition to the goldsmith Bettoyne, and the fishmonger Turk, and the draper Poultney, we have among the lists of mayors and sheriffs, Grantham, a pepperer, or grocer ; Swanlond, a draper ; Lancer, a mercer ; Ely, a fishmonger ; Conduit, or " *de Conductu*," M.P. in 1322 and 1327, a vintner ; and at last, after 1340, the companies were so universally recognised that every mayor or sheriff's name was followed by that of the trade or craft to which he happened to belong. It is evident, then, that a great change had occurred in the condition of these bodies since the days of Walter Hervey, and that the arrangements in progress under Sir Ralf de Sandwich had now been completed.

The city companies have, in fact, from that day to this, been, so to speak, the very city itself. We have already mentioned as among the early guilds the weavers and saddlers. There is no kind of proof now to be found which connects the companies formed under Edward III. with the guilds which existed before the time of his grandfather,* yet it would be rash to say the

* Herbert's valiant struggle to connect them must be considered a failure. He does not adduce a single fact which can be accepted as satisfactory.

companies did not grow out of the guilds. There is no royal charter of the modern kind now extant which dates before those which were granted in 1327 to the goldsmiths, to the tailors and armourers, and to the skinnners. These are among the twelve great livery companies, so called, it is said, from the leave they obtained to wear a dress of the colours of their respective societies. Another derivation connects the word "livery" with the freedom of the city. The tailors and linen armourers were at first conjoined. Edward III. also gave charters to the grocers, fishmongers, drapers, and vintners. As an example of the way the modern companies grew up, we may take the history of the grocers.* Twenty-two persons, we are told, carrying on the business of pepperers, in and near the Cheap, chiefly along the rows of booths which about this time began to be known as Soper's Lane,† agreed to meet together and draw up rules for the regulation of their trade. In the first volume of the records of the grocers' company, these twenty tradesmen are spoken of as the founders. It is evident, therefore, that whatever were the guilds to which any of them may have belonged, this is an entirely new departure. The meeting, which was held "in the Abbot's place of Bery"—a hall probably, in St. Mary Axe, which they hired for the purpose—was preceded by a dinner, to the expenses of which each man contributed twelve pence, and twenty-three pence more were disbursed by the wardens, who were elected on the spot, namely Roger Osekyn and Lawrence de Haliwell. They commenced operations at

* It has been carefully detailed in a volume by John B. Heath, of which the second edition appeared in 1854.

† See Riley, 'Memorials,' p. xviii., as to the origin of this street name. Stow is mistaken in attributing it to Alan le Soper. It has long been merged in Queen Street.

once, though they did not obtain the royal recognition till eight years later.*

The work of incorporation went on merrily during this and several succeeding reigns. Eight of the twelve great companies were chartered before the end of Edward's life. Exclusiveness and monopoly were, of course, the objects of each society thus formed. They desired to regulate trade and also to regulate traders. They fixed the prices. They fixed the methods of manufacture. They made rules as to the conduct and even the dress of their members. It is apparent that to do this effectually they required to have power to forbid all interference from without. No one must carry on their trade who was not of their mystery. It will be remembered how the charters of Walter Hervey were superseded by the want of this power. The royal charters conferred it—though it may be doubted whether the mayor's charter might not legally have been quite as efficient—and every new company as it was formed sought for the distinction of a grant from the king himself. Edward's constant wars made every windfall welcome, and batches of charters seem to synchronise with great expeditions. What Richard I., seeking money for his crusade, did for English cities, Edward III., gathering armies against Scotland and France, did for the mercantile communities.† The com-

* The name of grocer, or rather "grosser," was applied to the pepperers because they sold their goods in gross (see Skeat's 'Dictionary,' p. 245). Retail dealers were called "regrators."

† The more carefully the history of the companies is studied, I venture to think, the more clear it becomes that in identifying them with the older guilds a serious obstruction has been placed across the course of the investigator. The only guild which now survives, even in name, is the guild merchant, that is, the corporation. All the others, if they lasted till the Reformation, must then have been dissolved. Many, no doubt, had meanwhile merged in the companies, or more correctly had been super-

panies included in every case the greater merchants. The most eminent members of the city governing body—the aldermen—joined them, and in a very few years they were able not only to control trade, but also to control the corporation.

The power in the city constitution assumed by the twelve livery companies, became, in the reign of Edward's feeble successor, the cause of many troubles. In 1346 each ward elected its alderman, and a number of the inhabitants, four, six, eight, according to the size of the ward, to be members of the common council. All elections were made by a similar number of six, eight, or twelve as the case might be. In a few years it was found that this arrangement would not work. The governing body had been able to summon what electors it pleased. In 1375, accordingly, it was superseded, and the great companies were recognised in an ordinance by which the power of nomination was taken from the wards and given to the companies, and by which the persons so nominated were to be summoned both to the council and the elections. It will be seen at once that this deprived a large body of citizens of all municipal power except that of electing their aldermen, and was a fruitful source of contention and disorder, as we shall observe further on.*

The halls of the companies speedily rose in various parts of the city, and were conspicuous among the

seded by them in the exercise of their secular, as distinguished from their religious, functions. An example of the confusion of guilds and companies is afforded by the history of the Skinners as given in Strype's 'Stow,' where we are told that Edward III. addressed them as the "Guild or Fraternity of the Skinners of London." But the charter really runs—to the king's "beloved men of the city of London called Skinners." (See Herbert, p. 301.) See below, *note* p. 225.

* Stubbs, 'Constitutional History,' iii. 575.

humbler houses of private merchants. The palaces of the old city families, the Basings, the Bukerels, the Lovekyns and others, were found convenient in some cases. The goldsmiths occupied a house built by Sir Nicholas de Segrave, whose brother had been bishop during three years of Edward II.'s reign. The merchant taylors were at first in a hall "about the back side of the Red Lion in Basing Lane," but eventually bought a mansion in the ward of Cornhill from Edmund Crepin, and a little later added to it the holding of the Outwich family, and established themselves firmly where they have ever since remained. The mercers had their shops about the eastern end of Cheap, and a kind of bazaar called the Mercery. The open market-place was being permanently occupied by this time, and one of the last remains of it was the meadow which adjoined the crown-seld already described. The mercers had made a small settlement for themselves on the north of the Cheap side, but the space was required for an extension of the buildings of the hospital of St. Thomas of Acon, which, about this time, as mentioned before,* was reforming itself into a school. The mercers obtained the open space opposite, and there erected the hall and other buildings in which they remained till Henry IV. gave them the crown-seld itself. On the Dissolution they obtained the site of their old quarters and carried on the good work begun by the brethren of St. Thomas. The fishmongers and stock-fishmongers had many halls about Thames Street and Old Fish Street, but eventually settled down on the site they still occupy. The skinnerst† were fortunate, after

* Chapter iv.

† They are said to have had a licence from Henry III. to hold land, an early recognition of a company, if we could accept it. There is probably here a confusion between guild and company. I assume this in the text.

some migrations, in obtaining a house which had been used by an old guild of their trade, but which had long been in private hands. It came to Edward III. shortly before he incorporated the company, and they bought it from him.

The regulations made by these new bodies for their respective trades were solemnly confirmed at the Guildhall. There are numerous entries on the subject in the city records. Some of them were afterwards included in the royal charters: and on the whole the rules set forth in the Letter-books of the corporation are earlier than the grants from the crown. The grocers, described as "the good folks of Soper Lane,"* for example, register their regulations as early as 1309, and the armourers as early as 1322. Edward's charters to the pellipers or skinners, and to the girdlers are set down in the same collection, and the bye-laws of the cutlers, spurriers, pewterers, heaumers,† hatters, glovers, and other minor traders are also to be found.‡ The companies thus, by union among themselves, attained enormous power, which in too many cases they wielded very tyrannically. The general tendency of their action was, however, for the benefit of the city; and this was especially the case when they set themselves to reform abuses and prevent adulteration and frauds upon purchasers.§ Whittington, who became so famous, was particularly noted for his sternness to the brewers who made bad beer. If the laws of the companies were fairly carried out, they must have produced excellent results; but unfortunately, it does not seem

* This description of the pepperers or grocers does away with any idea that they were already a company, though long before there had been at least one guild of pepperers (see chap. vi.).

† Makers of helmets.

‡ All are printed in Riley's 'Memorials.'

§ Most of these notes are from Herbert's first volume.

that any of the officials of the time were above taking presents, and even Whittington received money and wine from the brewers on different occasions. The goldsmiths in their charters had imposed upon them the duty of assaying gold and silver, and have discharged it ever since. The tailors inspected the cloth fair in West Smithfield, and tried the measures with a standard yard of solid silver. The grocers had the oversight of drugs, the vintners the tasting and gauging of wines. All these duties had been discharged previously in fits and starts by the mayor and sheriffs, and their transference to the companies facilitated the movements of business and, could we but be sure they were honestly performed, must have tended to benefit the consumer. Another and very important branch of the ordinances of the companies related to apprentices. No one could enter a mystery without an apprenticeship, and in some of the trades even a journeyman must have served his time to the craft.

While Edward and his family were engaged abroad in fighting the French, these changes were quietly going on at home. Not that the citizens failed in patriotic sentiment. On the contrary they were equally ready to pay for men-at-arms to go with the king and to devise grand pageants when the city was honoured by a visit from some royal guest or captive. Edward took care to interfere as little as possible with the affairs of the citizens, and in return he was as popular as any English king before him, and as able to obtain a loan or gift when money ran short. He gave them leave in 1354 to have silver maces carried before their mayor and his sheriffs, an honorary favour, which yet produced in the following year a vote of twenty-five men-at-arms and five hundred archers, "all clad in one livery." This

contingent took part in the glories of Poitiers, and, no doubt, marched in the van of the procession when the boy hero, already known as the Black Prince, led king John of France a prisoner through the Cheap on his way to the Savoy. A thousand citizens in their holiday costumes crossed the bridge on horseback and met the royal personages in Southwark, while the mayor and aldermen welcomed them at the foot of the bridge and conducted them through the city. A crown was put upon the organisation of the great livery companies when the king himself was enrolled as a linen armourer. Thenceforth the list of honorary members of the merchant taylors, as they are now called, has contained almost every English king, and princes and nobles in due proportion.*

* In the above attempt to dissociate guilds from companies, the burden of proof appears to lie upon those who assert their identity. I am aware that my views have not been received with favour by some of my readers. My contention is briefly, first, that there is no necessary connection between the old guilds and the new companies; and, secondly, that the religious character, if any, which may have attached to certain companies, if not to all, was expressly abolished in 1552.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BISHOP.

IT would be hardly possible to overrate the influence of religion on the external appearance of London in the fourteenth century. The parishes did not multiply, but in each of the churches were numberless private chantries. The older monasteries were as sleepy as ever, but beside them were the friars, ever begging, ever teaching, ever preaching. The houses of the poorer folk were still very miserable. Overcrowding must have been the rule, when every man had to live near the scene of his daily work. A long journey home after dark was impossible through unlighted streets and unmended roads: and so, although the houses were taller than before and overhung more and more until opposite neighbours could shake hands from upper windows, the squalor, the bad air, the want of pure water, the teeming population, contributed to a state of things almost incredible. The death rate must have been under ordinary circumstances from 40 to 60 per 1000, instead of from 18 to 20 as now. And when the plague came, as it did in 1350 and raged for seven years, the average of deaths must have been something of which we can have no conception. Even if the estimate be exaggerated which makes 50,000 to have been buried during one year in a new cemetery provided by Bishop Stratford,—the nephew of Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, who as bishop of Winchester had

taken so prominent a part in the deposition of Edward II.—yet the fact that the deaths were so estimated by contemporary writers shows how terribly the pestilence must have raged. Sir Walter Manny bought “the Spittle Croft” which adjoined the bishop’s field, and the two together were soon afterwards covered by the buildings of a Carthusian monastery built by Stratford’s successor, bishop Northburgh.*

The blow inflicted by this awful visitation seems to have taken effect in an increase of ecclesiastical establishments; chiefly, however, in the endowment of mass priests to pray for the souls of the deceased, one or more of whom must have been mourned by every family. The result did not add much to the substantial beauty of the parish churches. They continued small and mean with certain exceptions, such as St. Mary le Bow in Cheap: and the view of the city from a distance, say from the opposite side of the river, must have been remarkable for the number rather than the height of the towers. Some of the conventual churches and the noble spire of St. Paul’s must have been very conspicuous among the smaller edifices. The aspect of old London in the later years of Edward III., in fact, from what we know, was very fine. No doubt, as in the case of so many modern cities on the Continent and in the East, the best view was from the outside, where the narrow winding lanes, the broken pavement, the filth and ruin were not apparent, and where the spectator was astonished by the vast mass of buildings great and small which covered the double hill, a few standing out by themselves on account either of their beauty or their

* For a full and careful account of the Charterhouse, see Archdeacon Hale’s paper in the ‘Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society,’ iii. 309. See also vol. ii. p. 169.

size. The long, red-tiled roofs of the companies' halls were contrasted with the shingled or lead-covered spires of the churches which rose between, while here and there a grim bastion of the city wall, or one of the gates, crowned by vanes and banners alternating with the heads of Scottish marauders, showed high and square.

The Templars had long disappeared ; but their house was the first to greet the traveller from the west. It seems never to have been decided whether the Temple is in the city or not. The Temple, in fact, was on the spot before the city had ventured to throw its arms round the new suburban ward of Farringdon Without. So far back as 1360 the question was raised. The original Templars had come and gone before 1313. Their successors were nothing if not aggressive and litigious. The Lord Mayor who ventures into the precincts of the lawyers with his sword and his mace held upright does so at the risk of being mobbed. Woe betide the policeman who pursues a thief into the labyrinth of courts. Yet the Outer Temple, a little district of alleys and lanes chiefly named after Devereux, earl of Essex, is in the city and amenable to the jurisdiction of the civic authorities. But when the students of the common law in 1326 accepted their lease from the hospitallers to whom the house of the Knights of the Sepulchre had been given, an exception was made for what was then and long after the house of the bishops of Exeter. The bishops of Ely were also entitled to "corrody" in the Temple, and John of Kirkeby had many a contest with the knights on the subject, before he removed to Holborn.* It was to his house here, as we saw in the last chapter, that the body of the unfortunate bishop

* See below, chapter xx.

Stapleton, of Exeter, was carried by pious choristers after his murder, and his successors retained their lodgings on the spot till the time of Henry VIII.

The Templars' first settlement had been in Holborn. There, in 1118, they built a house which must have stood very close to what is now the north-east corner of Chancery Lane, or Southampton Buildings. Some relics of its carvings were unearthed on the spot a few years ago. The knights removed to the "New Temple," as it was called for centuries, in 1184, and seem to have made it very strong. King John both resided in it on several occasions and also kept his treasures under the guardianship of the Templars. When they were suppressed, amid the troublous times of Edward II., their house, of which only the chapel now remains, was given by the king to his cousin Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke. The earl of Lancaster next obtained it, but on his "martyrdom" it reverted to the crown, and in 1338, by special arrangement, went to the Templars' old rivals, the Knights of John of Jerusalem, at Clerkenwell. They had a house of their own already, and leased two-thirds of the estate to the students of common law for a rent of 10*l*. a year, while the Outer Temple, as we have seen, continued in the occupation of the bishops of Exeter.

Of the buildings which existed when the Knights of St. John made these transfers but one can be said to remain. The church with its circular nave is the most ancient edifice along the route between the Tower and Westminster Abbey. A crypt still to be seen at Clerkenwell, and the church of St. Bartholomew, Smithfield, both retain features of the same period. But the Templars' chapel has peculiarities unequalled for their interest. Only three other examples of the round form

affected by the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre are to be found in England. One is at Northampton, and one at Maplestead in Essex, and most of us have seen the quaint little church which represents the Temple at Cambridge. The modern Templars have dealt very hardly with their church. Considering its antiquity and the venerable associations which might have been expected to guard its walls, which even the Great Fire spared, one is tempted to wonder at the audacity, rather than the bad taste, which has wiped off every trace of age, has renewed every crumbling stone, has re-chiselled every carving, has filled the windows with kaleidoscope glass, has painted the roof with gaudy patterns, and has taken the old monuments, rich with heraldry, down from their places and bestowed them under the bellows of the organ.*

On the opposite side of Fleet Street another religious house survives, like the Temple, in its chapel alone.† The hospital for converted Jews, which Henry III. founded in 1233, has become the Rolls office, and the chapel was long desecrated by the presence of accumulated records. Little but the skeleton of the building is ancient, but very few of the thousands who daily pass so near it have any idea of the wealth of renaissance monuments which the old walls contain. In calling attention to them I feel a certain hesitation. Should the ruthless hand of the restorer be let loose on the altar-tomb of John Young, by Torregiano, it will be a source of regret to every one who can admire work in a style which is neither gothic, nor classical, nor even "Queen Anne."

* This is scarcely credible, but strictly true.

† The liberty of the Rolls is not reckoned in the city, that is, in the ward of Farringdon. It may, therefore, be assumed that the boundaries of the ward of Anketin de Auvergne had not been defined in 1233.

The chapel in which Burnet and Atterbury, but above all Butler, preached, and whose pulpit was filled in our own time by the lamented Brewer, has exceptional claims on our regard.

The extension of the city liberties to Temple Bar was an infringement of the rights of the Abbot of Westminster, in whose great parish of St. Margaret the churches of St. Dunstan and St. Bride were but chapels of ease. Their dedications show the lateness of their dates. The dean and chapter still present to St. Bride's, but Henry III. persuaded the abbot to annex St. Dunstan's to his Jews' House. The opening of the Fleet Bridge under Ludgate, which had previously been a water-gate only, must have taken place before 1228, and the "bar of the New Temple" is mentioned as early as the first year of the fourteenth century. A new roadway or street now connected the outlying suburb of Showell Lane, now Shoe Lane, with the city, by a route more direct than that which led through Newgate and over Holborn Bridge. Of the manor or ward which the great goldsmiths of the Farrington family purchased here I have spoken already.* This part, westward from the Fleet, was previously the aldermanry of Anketin de Auvergne, and was known for a time as his ward, and before him it apparently belonged to Joyce Fitz Peter.†

That there was no bar here before 1246 is probable from the wording of the original grant of the Savoy.‡

* See chapter vii.

† See chapter vi., and also vol. ii. p. 70.

‡ 'Memorials of the Savoy,' p. 10. "Extra muros civitatis." In another deed, dated in 1284 (Appendix, p. 248), the phrase occurs, "extra civitatem Londoniarum." It is possible, therefore, that Temple Bar did not come into existence till the end of the century, and that it was part of the system of defence completed under Edward I.

A piece of ground, there spoken of as lying outside the walls of London, is described in subsequent documents as lying outside Temple Bars. Similar bars were set up on the great western highway in Holborn, and at Smithfield, Norton Folgate, Whitechapel, and other places on the principal roads. When the archway which subsisted till our own time was built in 1670, it succeeded to "a House of Timber," described by Stow, who, however, mentions "posts, rails, and a chain" as being the ancient arrangement. The singular form was adopted instead of the plural when this "house" was erected, but the bar was never properly a city gate, that is, a fortified opening in the wall. There was in fact no wall or other defence between city and county. Shire Lane* till lately marked the boundary. Access could be had from the Templar's tilt-yard—now the site of the New Law Courts—into the city by numerous passages.

In addition to the monasteries and hospitals already enumerated as having been in existence in the time of Fitzstephen, a walk through the city from the Temple Bars, at the close of the reign of Edward III., would have revealed a great number newly founded. The friars, to whom I have already had several occasions to refer, established themselves early in the reign of Henry III., and by the middle of the fourteenth century their churches had become conspicuous ornaments of the city. The Carmelites had a house next door to the Temple, the site of which is still known as the White Friars'. On the opposite bank of the Fleet was the more celebrated settlement of the Black Friars, or Dominicans, who made their appearance in London in 1221, when, under the patronage of Hubert de Burgh, they opened their first house, like the Templars, in Holborn. The

* Called Searle's Place at the time of its removal.

history of the gradual piecing together of an estate on this spot has been told with loving minuteness by a modern antiquary.* In 1250 they had managed by gift or purchase to obtain so much land that it became possible for them to build a convent suited to the requirements of the order. Only a part of this estate, apparently, was occupied by the earl of Lincoln when the friars moved, in 1285, to their new buildings on the river's bank, at what we call still the Black Friars'. For this purchase the earl gave 550 marks, to be paid by instalments. The new house actually interrupted the course of the city wall, which the brethren, such was their extraordinary influence, obtained leave to remove and rebuild. One of their number, Robert Kilwardby, was at this time archbishop of Canterbury, and to his good offices, no doubt, they were indebted for the king's favour. It must be allowed to the credit of the Black Friars, that so far, at least, they did not seek popularity at any sacrifice of principle. They endeavoured to mitigate the cruelty of the decrees against the Jews by every means in their power, and when, in 1255, thousands were sacrificed in a general persecution, the friars protected them with little regard to their own safety, "*quod dictu horribile est*," as one of the chroniclers of the day exclaims. So, too, at the time of the deposition of Edward II., they took the king's side, and so greatly incurred the wrath of the Londoners, that they had to flee from their house into the country.

Gregory Rokesley, who, as we have seen,† did much for the Grey Friars, seems to have looked with equal favour on the Dominicans. It was on a site of his presentation in "two lanes or ways next the street of

* Mr. Palmer's paper will be found in the 'Reliquary,' vol. xvii.

† See above chapter vii.

Baynard's Castle," that their second house was built; and he permitted them to take down Montfitchet's Castle, and to use the materials for a church, which must have been one of the finest in London. It has as completely disappeared in its turn as the Norman baron's tower which it succeeded.* The city wall was pulled down from Ludgate to the Thames and rebuilt, so as to include the convent within its shelter. At the bend of the wall thus made a "certain good and comely tower" was reserved for the accommodation of the king, whenever he might choose to visit the brethren. Parliaments were held here on several occasions, and the magnificence of the buildings is frequently referred to in contemporary records. The Friars Preachers gradually fell into all the vices which beset their brethren of the older monasteries, and by the time of the suppression had as little claim on the public regard as any body of Benedictines or Cistercians in the kingdom.

The churches of the friars were always much esteemed places of burial. The Black Friars could boast of preserving the tomb of Hubert de Burgh, which they brought with them from Holborn, and in addition were laid in their spacious aisles the bodies of John of Eltham, the brother of Edward III., the father and mother of Henry VIII.'s last wife, and many other great folk, one of the most remarkable being that Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, who was Caxton's patron or friend, and who was as

* There is an interesting reference to this and other churches of the friars in a petition of the mayor, aldermen, and commonalty to Henry VIII. in 1538 ('Memorandum Relating to the Royal Hospitals,' printed in 1836):—"May it please your grace . . . to consider that the four churches of late belonging to Grey, Black, White, and Augustine Friars, be the most ample churches within your said city, *Powles* only except." Of the four a part of one only was spared till our own day, when the last remains of the old work in the church of the Augustines was obliterated under the name of restoration.

much distinguished for his learning as he was disgraced by his cruelty in war. But though the Black Friars could show many noble names inscribed on their pavement, and had among their relics the heart of queen Eleanor and that of Alphonso her eldest son, they were not so highly favoured in this respect as their neighbours on the hill above. The church of the Grey Friars has disappeared as completely as that of the Black Friars, its site being now partly a cemetery and partly covered by the modern Christ Church, Newgate Street: but in it were laid the bodies of four queens, and a larger number of great folk than even in "Powles" itself. Weever says of it that it was "honoured with the sepulture of four queens, four duchesses, four countesses, one duke, two earls, eight barons, and some thirty-five knights," summing them all up as "six hundred and sixty-three persons of quality here interred." Stow tells us of "nine tombs of alabaster and marble invironed with strikes of iron, in the choir; and one tomb in the body of the church also coped with iron; besides seven score grave stones of marble."* The queens were Margaret, the second wife of Edward I.; Isabella, the widow of Edward II.; her daughter, Joan "Makepeace," wife of David Bruce, king of Scotland, whose funeral is said by tradition to have taken place the same day as her mother's; and Isabella, wife of Lord Fitzwalter, in her own right queen of Man. Besides these the church contained the hearts of Eleanor, queen of Henry III., and of Edward II.† All the monuments, which were at the east end of the church, were destroyed

* A catalogue of the monuments in the Grey Friars' church, from the register of the house, is printed in 'Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica,' vol. v.

† The duchesses buried here were Beatrice of Brittany, daughter of Henry III., and Eleanor, Duchess of Buckingham; the duke was John of Bourbon, who died here in captivity after the battle of Agincourt.

and sold for the paltry sum of fifty pounds by Sir Martin Bowes, Lord Mayor in 1545.*

The Franciscans, who came to London during the lifetime of their founder, in 1224,† were at first entertained by the Friars Preachers who had preceded them. They then hired a house in Cornhill where they remained until the munificence of the citizens allowed them to migrate to Newgate Street, where John Ewen, or Iwyn, gave them a site, and himself joined their body. It has sometimes been said that they took up their abode among the shambles in token of humility, which is possible, but Ewen's grant and the probable openness of the spot are sufficient reasons for their choice. The first chapel, afterwards the choir, was built for them by William Joyner, mayor in 1239. The nave was added by Henry Waleys; the chapter-house by Walter le Poter; the dormitory, as already mentioned, by Gregory Rokesley, who was buried here; the refectory by Bartholomew de Castro, who further gave the friars an annual feast on St. Bartholomew's day; the infirmary by Peter de Helyland, and the studies by Bonde, a king-of-arms. In later years the famous Whittington built and furnished their library.

The conventual buildings were but mean, as was the wont of the Franciscans, but a second church, which was not completed for twenty-one years, must have been one of the most magnificent in London. It was 300 feet long, and had columns and pavement all of marble. The ground occupied by the domestic buildings is now covered by the school known as Christ's Hospital, in

* Malcolm, iii. 331. Ten tombs and 140 gravestones were sold on this occasion. The church, or what remained of it, thus desecrated, was burnt in 1666.

† See preface to the 'Grey Friars' Chronicles' (Camden Society), by J. G. Nichols.

many parts of which remains of the old architecture may still be seen.

There was also a house for sisters of the order, without Aldgate. Waleys was its greatest benefactor and was buried in the church. It is commemorated by the street called the Minories, as the sisters were known as Minoresses, or poor Clares, from their patron, St. Clare. A curious history attaches to the site of their house, which though it was in Portsoken is not now reckoned in the city.* Their church soon after the Reformation was made parochial, under the name of Holy Trinity in the Minories, the gift being in the crown. Pretensions of an absurd kind were put forward by successive incumbents, as to exemption from episcopal visitation and other privileges of a royal chapel. Boniface VIII. in 1294 had indeed made the old house of the sisters exempt, and nothing but a kind of local tradition existed to support the claim, which was not, however, overruled till it had been a source of considerable trouble to the authorities. The curates used to perform marriages, as they were about the same time, and on similar grounds, performed at Somerset House and the Savoy, without licences or the publication of banns. The old church, after having been repeatedly repaired, was pulled down in 1706 and rebuilt as we now see it. The conventual buildings must have been of a substantial and even ornamental character, and worthy rivals of the neighbouring foundation after which the modern church is called.†

* Cunningham, p. 847 (ed. 1849), evidently believed that Trinity Church was that of the priory of Aldgate, of which I have spoken in a former chapter. But its history is fully detailed by Newcourt, i. 562. The author of 'Old and New London,' it need hardly be said, falls into Cunningham's error, vol. ii. p. 249.

† Smith, 'Topography of London,' p. 8, gives two views of the ruins finally removed after a fire in 1796. The superior of the convent is called an abbess by all the authorities. See 'Archæologia,' vol. xv.

Intermediate between the Minoresses and the male representatives of their order, was the site of the noble foundation of the Augustinian Friars, which still, in an abbreviated form, retains their name, as the church—also shortened—retains some of its architectural features.* The church pavement still shows traces of some two score of brasses, all marking the graves of illustrious people, including a step-brother of Richard II., an earl of the Bohun family, one of the Arundels, one of the Veres, one of the Courtenays and one of the Berkeleys. Of the fabric of the church, which was built for the friars by the grandson of their founder, another Humfrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, about the middle of the fourteenth century, we are told that it boasted a noble spire—"small, high, and straight," says Stow, who lived under its shadow—in this respect probably excelling the other churches of the mendicant orders. The friars had made their first settlement here in 1253, and gradually, by encroachments, by favour, by purchase,—in short, by incessant activity, open or underhand,—they had put together, in the very heart of the city, an estate which even in the middle ages must have been immensely valuable. The church owes its partial preservation to its having been assigned for the use of a Dutch congregation, but after the dissolution neither considerations of taste nor the prayers of the inhabitants of the parish availed with the marquis of Winchester to spare the choir or to save the falling steeple : so that, as Strype observes bitterly, for one man's commodity London lost so goodly an ornament, "and times hereafter may more talk of it." Times hereafter, unfortunately, have to complain of what in some respects is an even greater act of vandalism. Of

* See paper on Austin Friars, by Hugo, London and Middlesex Society 'Transactions,' ii. i.

the old church as Stow knew it, little if anything now remains. A modern building, with neat masonry and shallow mouldings, was erected in its place under the name of restoration some few years ago, and the last remnant of the four noble churches—next to “Powles” the finest in London,—of which the corporation spoke in such moving terms to Henry VIII., was wantonly and stupidly destroyed.

These mendicant orders, as the friars were called, abounded in bishops. Even then the greatness of the see of London made it necessary for its incumbent to employ a coadjutor or suffragan. For a long time Peter de Corbavia, an Italian, whose proper diocese was in Dalmatia, resided in London, and helped bishop Gravesend. We find him, in 1327, employed to purify St. Paul's, where two rival canons had fought and one of them had shed blood.* Another of his duties was to perform episcopal rites in churches which the pope had specially excepted from the supervision of the bishop. In 1331 we meet him again at St. Paul's to consecrate a new bell. In the following year he died and was buried among his brethren of the Grey Friars. The Black Friar, archbishop Kilwardby, has already been mentioned. The pride of the friars increased with years. Their learning soon gave place to mere pendency. Their credit with the people declined. But their churches only grew more and more magnificent, and this lengthened notice of them is justified because, though they must have been among the most prominent architectural features of the city, they have now so utterly disappeared.

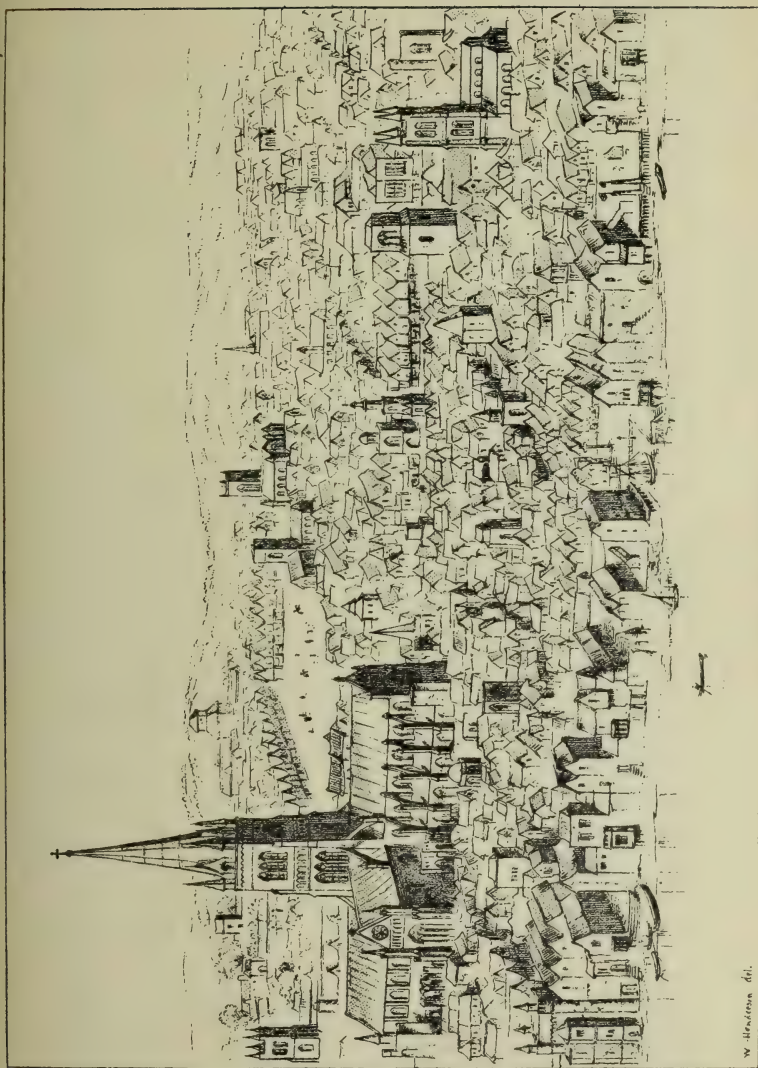
But far above all competitors within the boundaries of the city rose the new fabric of the cathedral church.

* Stubbs, ‘Chronicles,’ xci.

The pavement was laid down in 1312, and the spire finished with its cross and pommel within three years more.* Though it was not built of stone, but of timber covered with lead, this steeple must have presented a magnificent appearance. It rose, according to contemporary authority, to the extraordinary height of 520 feet:—"The height of the stone fabric of the belfry of the same church contains from the level ground cclx feet. The height of the wooden fabric of the same belfry contains cclxxiiij feet. But altogether it does not exceed five hundred and xx^{ty} feet. Also the ball of the same belfry is capable of containing, if it were vacant, ten bushels of corn; the rotundity of which contains xxxvj inches of diameter, which make three feet; the surface of which, if it were perfectly round, ought to contain four thousand lxviiij inches, which make xxviiij square feet and the fourth part of one square foot. The staff of the cross of the same belfrey contains in height xv feet, the cross beam being vj feet."† The Londoners were justly proud of their cathedral church, which must have cost vast sums. The contemporary chronicles contain frequent entries as to the completion of various parts, the translation of the bodies of the saints to their new tombs, the dedication of altars, the reception of

* In a 'Chronicle of [London,' printed by Edward Tyrrell in 1827 (from Harl. MS. 565), the dimensions of the church are given according to "a tablet hung against a column by the tomb of the Duke of Lancaster." This tablet is mentioned in Strype's *Stow*, but is quoted incorrectly. It is odd that Longman, in his 'Three Cathedrals' (p. 30), should have overlooked this Chronicle, which is sometimes attributed to Sir Harris Nicolas.

† I have thought it worth while to give this quotation from the 'Chronicle' printed in 1827, as it seems to be little known, and was not referred to in some recent controversies. See Longman's 'Three Cathedrals dedicated to St. Paul.' There is a little view of this spire in the 'Annales Paulini,' edited by Mr. Stubbs in his volume of 'Chronicles' for the Rolls series, p. 277.



W. H. Stowe del.

Stanford's Geogr. Esamp.

ST. PAUL'S BEFORE 1561.

As sketched by Van den Wyngaerde

London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

precious relics and the consecration of bells. Round about the church was the precinct wall pierced by six gates, of which the chief opened upon Ludgate Hill, affording therefore a measure for the eye of the visitor approaching from the west, and perhaps framing as in a picture the noble front of the church itself. At the north-western corner was the house of the bishop. On the south side was the chapter-house, the scene of so many events of historical importance in the history of our city. Though the citizens still claimed the right to assemble in their folkmote at the eastern end of the churchyard, where the wall and a gate only intervened between it and the wider expanse of the Cheap, the old open space had gradually been encroached upon, and in spite of protests and even an action at law, was so reduced as to be useless for its former purpose.*

When the first foundations of the new and glorious fabric of the cathedral church were laid, after the great fire of 1087, the Cheap was covered only with the tents and booths of the market-people. When it was finished, and the spire had received its "pommel and cross," in 1314, houses crowded round the precincts, the open space of Cheap was confined to a mere field near Bow Church, the vacant ground on the north was occupied by the church and house of the Franciscans, and only a little space, just about the bishop's "palace" and the so-called "Pardon Churchyard," were cultivated as gardens. In 1329 a fruiterer who was gathering nuts in what is now London House Yard fell from the tree and was killed.† The king's coroner deeply offended the

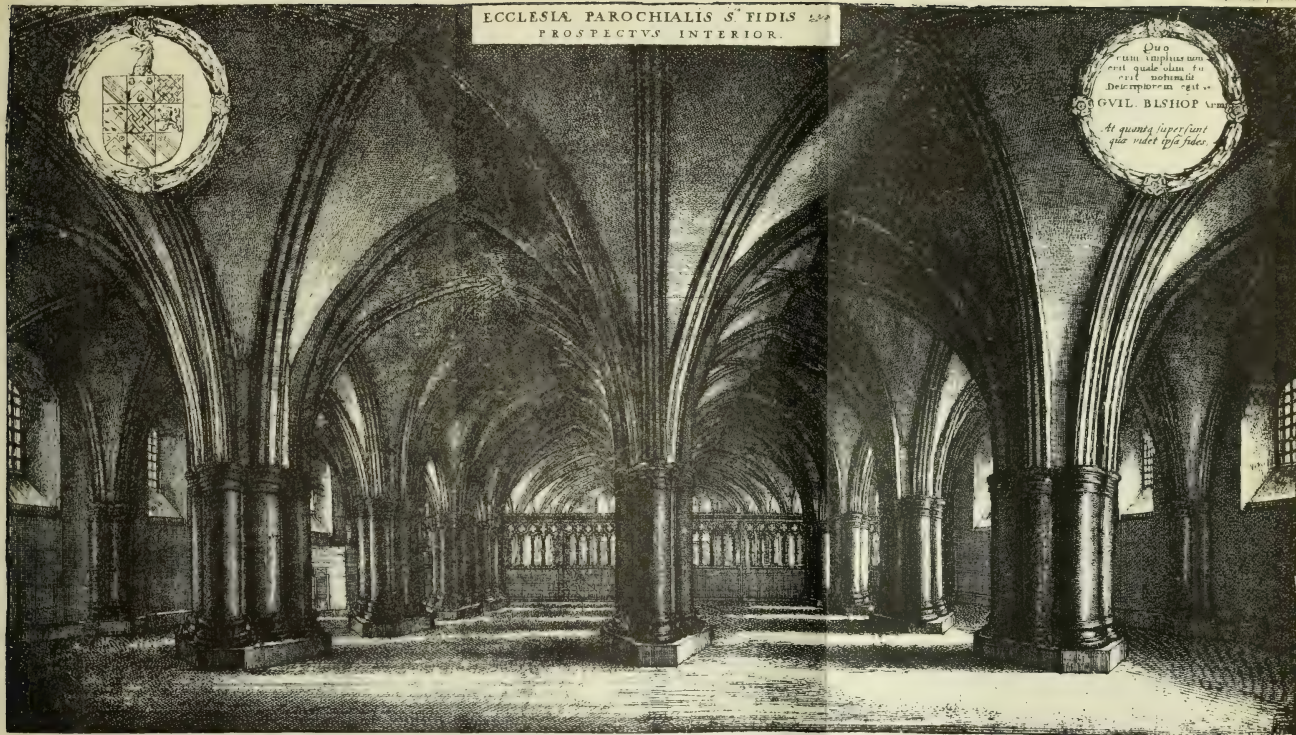
* 'Liber Custumarum,' 338, &c. See below, p. 310.

† 'Chronicles,' Stubbs, p. xcvi. The report of this accident must have been seen by some one who, quoting it from memory, confounded it with that described above in chapter iv. as having occurred in St. Michael Paternoster.

susceptibilities of the dean and chapter by holding an inquest in the bishop's hall, within their sacred precincts. The chapel of the Holy Ghost stood on the same side, and in Pardon Churchyard was an old Norman building erected by Gilbert Becket, the portreeve, with a cloister, in which the Dance of Death was painted. A little to the eastward and near the gate into Cheap stood a temporary pulpit, sometimes used for sermons by popular preachers, and sometimes, as at the death of Henry III. for proclamations to the people. The church itself had grown so much that two parish churches, St. Faith's and St. Gregory's, were both absorbed. The modern St. Paul's stands within the boundaries of St. Gregory's, though itself "extra-parochial," except the north aisle of the choir, which is in St. Faith's. The church was demolished about 1256 to make room for the completion of the east end of the cathedral, and parishioners worshipped in a portion of the crypt assigned to them and beautifully fitted up. St. Gregory's was built close to the western entrance, at the south side, and probably served as a foil or measure to the main building. In very mistaken taste, it was pulled down during the repairs and "beautifications" of St. Paul's carried out under the superintendence of Inigo Jones.

The number of priests attached to the service of this immense church, with all its chantries and altars, was reckoned at upwards of one hundred when the celebration of masses was abolished at the Reformation. Of these, the officers on the establishment,* so to speak, were the dean, subdean, four archdeacons, treasurer, sacrist, with his three vergers, precentor, chancellor, thirty canons, now called prebendaries, and twelve minor canons. This vast body subsists, in name at least, to this day, but the

* See Dr. Sparrow Simpson's 'History of Old St. Paul's,' p. 25.



London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

whole constitution of the cathedral has been altered. The prebendaries, from being each lord of a well endowed manor, are almost without any emolument. Four "residentiary canons," without estates, but drawing a salary from the ecclesiastical commissioners, represent the higher clergy, and occupy the pulpit. We do not so much as hear of any pulpit in the old church. Preaching was not, in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, considered at all a necessary part of the priestly office. When a sermon was wanted, some person of known eloquence, generally a friar, was called in for the purpose. To this day many old churches in our city and in the suburbs have "lectureships" attached to them, established for the most part at the time of the Puritan movement, when parishioners were dissatisfied with the mere ministrations of prayer and the sacrament.*

At the close of the reign of Edward III. the see was governed by one of the most popular of the long line of prelates who had occupied London House. Sudbury, his predecessor, had somewhat favoured the doctrines of Wycliffe, and had, in an evil day for himself, sneered at the devotion of the pilgrims who assembled at the shrine of St. Thomas in Canterbury Cathedral. The words were remembered against him, no doubt, when the Kentish mob dragged him from the Tower and smote off his head, in the riots of 1381. Six years earlier, on his advancement to the primacy, he had

* "It is clear from the minutes that preaching or lecturing on Sundays was not practised in the church, for in the year 1583 Mr. Shepherd offered to preach a lecture upon Tuesdays and Thursdays; but the parishioners preferred to have one on Sundays in the forenoon and on Thursdays in the night."—Parish Books of St. Margaret Lothbury, by Mr. Freshfield, in 'Archæologia,' xlv. 67. There are other notes to the same purpose in this curious and interesting paper. See also Newcourt, i. 20, who is quite indignant, apparently, at preaching going on in the cathedral.

been succeeded in London by William Courtenay, who in his turn, after Sudbury's tragical end, was promoted to Canterbury. Among their predecessors in London, mention should be made of Maurice, whose daring mind planned the great church as completed; of Gilbert Foliot, who was excommunicated by archbishop Thomas, to the great indignation of the citizens, who a few years later crowded to Canterbury to worship at the tomb of the new saint; of Richard of Ely, or FitzNeal, the first of a long line of literary bishops, and the leader of the movement which his dean, Radulphus de Diceto, carried on, and which eventually produced the great chroniclers of the thirteenth century; of Roger the Black, a patriot and legislator canonised by popular acclamation, whose shrine in the south aisle was long marked by the knees of innumerable votaries; and of the two Gravesends, uncle and nephew, the second of whom, Stephen, was hated and ill-treated for his fidelity to Edward II.*

Bishop Courtenay from the first opposed the doctrines of Wycliffe, and was no sooner in possession of the see than he called a synod at St. Paul's and summoned the reformer to appear before them and give an account of himself. He came, but accompanied by John of Gaunt, who was practically regent of the realm, as the Black Prince was dead, and the king, sunk in senility, thought of nothing but the charms of Alice Perrers, who on her part was busy amassing an estate from the foolish favours of her doting lover. Courtenay saw in the Duke of Lancaster the man who had driven William of Wykeham from the court, and had restored his favourite to the king. His appearance with Wycliffe did not in reality

* I may refer the reader who wishes to know more of these and the other great men who filled the seat of Erkenwald to Newcourt, Dugdale, Godwin, and the history of St. Paul's by the late Dean Milman.

strengthen the reformer's case. On the contrary, when the bishop and the duke had disputed fiercely for some minutes, the shouts of the assembled citizens became so threatening that John of Gaunt withdrew, and went to his house at the Savoy. The next day, nevertheless, he ventured again into the city to dine with a certain Flemish merchant, William of Ypres, who lived by the Thames' side. The city mob, meanwhile, had assembled in great force at the gates of the Savoy, and were clamouring for the duke and lord Percy, who had joined him in insulting the bishop. Wycliffe seems to have quietly retired from these tumultuous scenes. He must have perceived that the duke only took up his cause to annoy the bishop, and not from any conviction of the truth of his doctrine. News came in that the people had burst the gate and were wrecking the house. The duke and his friend left their oysters untasted, as we are told, and fled by boat to Kennington: and the bishop to whom also the tidings were brought while he was at dinner, himself went to appease the multitude, in which he at last succeeded by reminding them of the sacredness of the season, for Easter approached.

Notwithstanding Bishop Courtenay's popularity, there were occasions on which he acted against the true interests of the city. In 1376 Edward demanded an aid or subsidy from the clergy. Things were not going well in France, and money was badly wanted at home and abroad. The bishop withstood the king and the grant was refused. But old as he was Edward had his revenge. The bishop ventured to pin a papal bull relating to the Florentines to the cross of St. Paul's. It was a direct incitement to the lawless to pillage the wealthy Italian bankers and merchants. The mayor*

* I have not been able to make certain whether this mayor was Brember or his predecessor Ward.

protested and invoked the chancellor, himself a bishop.* Courtenay had put himself in danger of a "præmunire,"† and only a very speedy apology saved him from the consequences.

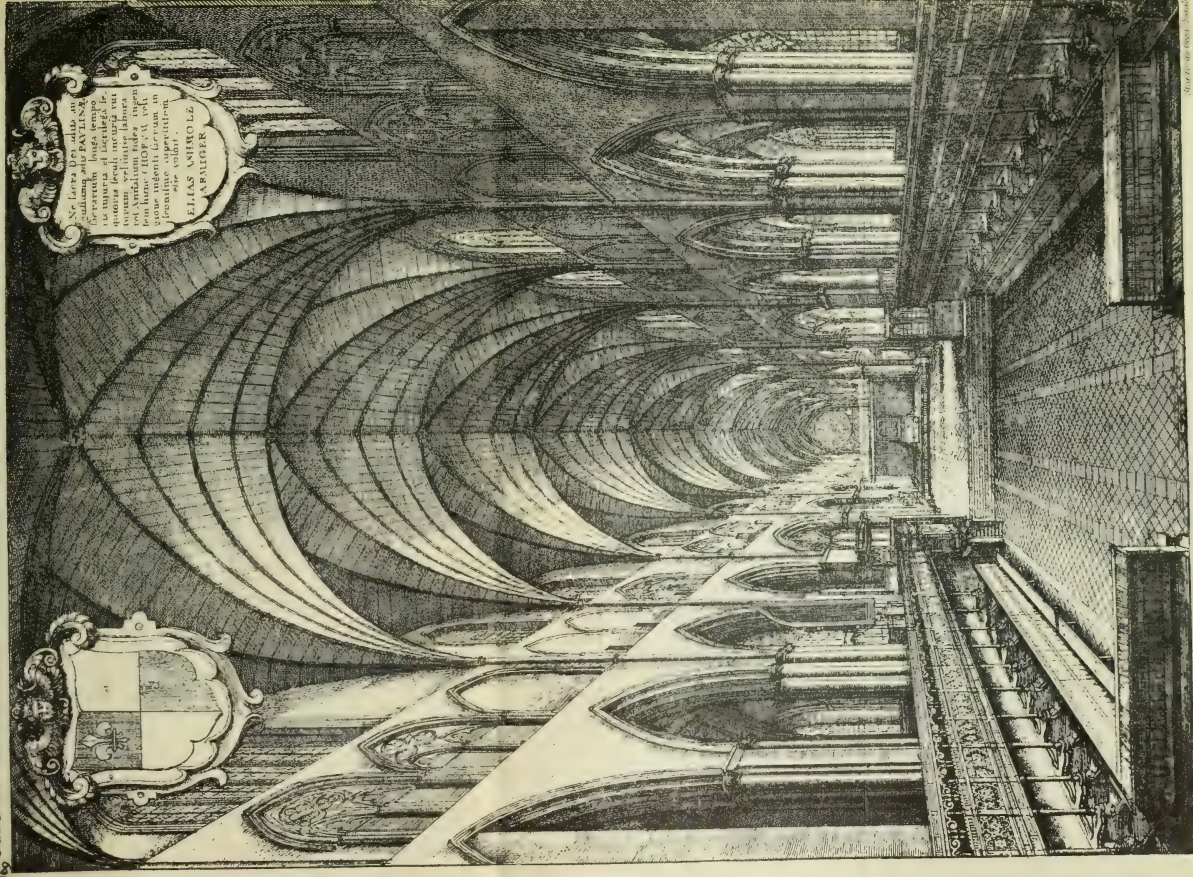
Courtenay became archbishop on the death of the unfortunate Sudbury, and was succeeded in London by Robert de Braybrook. The Wycliffe controversy still raged, and the city had not yet recovered the tumults of 1381. Half the house of the Hospitallers had been burnt at Clerkenwell, and the whole of the Savoy. The young king had excited a warm thrill of loyalty by his courageous conduct in Smithfield, and Walworth, who with his own hand had cut down the rebel Tyler, was still mayor. But Braybrook set himself to reform abuses, to restore ruins, to regulate services, to endow the poor priests and control the wealthy prebendaries of his church. He abolished the expenditure on gluttony, by which every new canon signalised his election. He introduced the Use of Sarum for the daily prayers. In many other ways he showed the practical turn of his mind, and after five centuries we still see traces of his work, not only in London, but in the suburbs.‡ The college of minor canons was founded by him and obtained a charter from the king in 1394. He cleared the nave of buyers and sellers, who, "not only men but women also," he complained,—"not only on common days, but especially on festivals,—expose their wares, as in a public market." He further threatened to excommunicate those who, throwing sticks and stones at the pigeons,

* The bishop of St. David's, John Thoresby, afterwards of Worcester and archbishop of York.

† The statute of Præmunire was passed in 1353 to counteract the aggressions of the pope, who was then at Avignon.

‡ It was by his arrangement that St. John's, Tyburn, was removed, and St. Mary "le Bourne" built instead. See vol. ii. chapter xxi.

CHORI ECCLESIA CATHEDRALIS S. PAVLI PROSPECTVS INTERIOR.



broke the carvings, or those who, playing at ball, broke the windows. It does not, of course, follow that these latter practices went on within the church, but it is evident that the great nave had been built only to be desecrated, and that the "Paul's Walk" of which we hear so much before the fire of 1666 was a very ancient institution.

Meanwhile Richard II. had long belied the promise of his youth. He kept no faith with the city. He established the very oppressive rules by which the constable of the Tower seized a toll of every boat or ship passing up the Thames. He made the citizens repair their wall and the forts on it, and ordained an "octroi" or duty on all food brought into the city to pay for the work. These and a multitude of minor oppressions did not endear him to the populace, who had their own battle to fight with the companies. Unfortunately we have here no longer the guidance of the candid Fitz-Thedmar: and it is barely possible to disentangle the ravelled web of city politics in the reign of Richard II. One mayor, Sir Nicholas Brember, took a prominent part in the affairs of the country at large, and seems to have been at least as worthless as any other of the king's unworthy favourites. He had participated in the suppression of Wat Tyler's rebellion, and at any rate no such mean motives were ever attributed to him as to Walworth* in this matter. In the struggles of the young king for emancipation from the control, first of Lancaster and afterwards of Gloucester, Brember was reckoned among the king's friends: and Richard was welcomed into the city on Sunday, November 10, 1387,

* They are set forth by Allen and others and need not be detailed here. It may be worth while to mention that the so-called dagger in the city arms is the sword of St. Paul, and has nothing to do with Walworth.

by a large assembly, comprising the mayor, Nicholas Exton, and the chief citizens, all wearing the royal livery. But the "five lords" had influence in London, and when Richard's schemes were known they did not meet with favour. Gloucester was received without hesitation, and the mayor told the king that though the citizens were ready to arm against his enemies they would do nothing against his friends. It was afterwards alleged that Brember and others, who called themselves the king's party, endeavoured to persuade the mayor to join them in a plot against the life of Gloucester, who was to be invited to a banquet in Brember's house, and there murdered. Whether such a plot was ever concocted, and whether Richard was a party to it, are questions which cannot now be answered. We only know that Brember's position was altogether unusual, although we cannot tell to what circumstance he owed the king's favour.

The question of the day in the city was one of little importance without the walls. We saw, in the last chapter, how the companies had come to wield unbounded influence in the election of the members of the governing body. In 1375 the common councilmen were elected exclusively by the companies. The wards, and those of their inhabitants who did not happen to be free of a company, were thus excluded from power. In 1384 another change was made. The populace rose against the tyranny of the companies. The fishmongers by their monopoly made themselves especially unpopular.* One poor wretch, John Constantyn, a shoemaker, went about among his neighbours counselling them to make resistance. He set the example by putting up the shutters of his shop—it was on Thursday, the 11th February—and calling upon the people to

* Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 482.

join him. It does not appear that any actual rioting took place, but the mayor, Brember, and the sheriffs sallied out, took Constantyn, hurried him into the Guildhall, condemned him, and without further delay cut off his head. For this act Brember obtained a special writ from the king, excusing him on account of the dangerous tendency of Constantyn's conduct. But it was evident that something must be done to appease the populace: and the election of the deliberative council was accordingly given back to the wards. At the same time, however, the choice of the electoral body was left with the companies, so that the people were no better off than before. It is evident that they obtained no power, for a fishmonger was mayor in the succeeding year. In 1386, Brember, in order to further the schemes of Suffolk, Tresilian, and the other "king's friends," forced himself into the mayoralty. He belonged to the grocers' company, which at this time was so powerful that it boasted of sixteen aldermen among its members. In spite of this strong support, public opinion was against the king, and when Gloucester appeared at Clerkenwell with forty thousand men, the gates were opened and Brember fled, but was shortly apprehended. He was brought before the parliament with Tresilian, and though he offered to prove his innocence by wager of battle, he was tried in the ordinary way. This was on the 17th of February, 1388, and on the 20th he was condemned, and immediately hanged at Tyburn.*

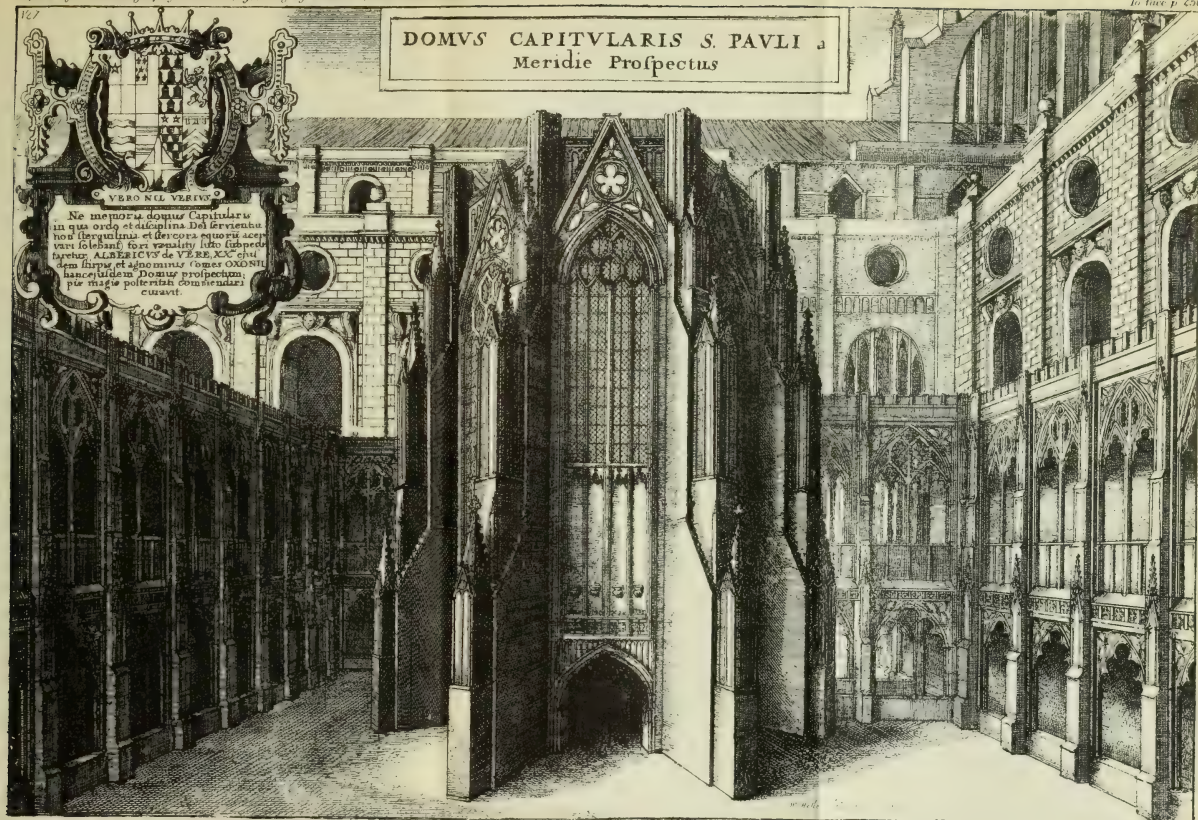
Bishop Braybrook seemed to have held aloof as much as possible from all interference in politics. When Richard came into the city in state in 1387, he did not appear. The following day, however, he withstood De la Pole, the king's favourite, to the face, reproaching

* Stow (p. 190) says he was beheaded.

him as a malefactor already condemned and only suffered to live through the royal clemency. Richard was highly incensed, and ordered the bishop out of the room. But in 1388, after the death of Brember and the exile of De la Pole,* Braybrook joined the archbishop in a solemn service at Westminster, where Richard renewed his coronation oath. Two years later he was concerned in a transaction of peculiar importance to the city.

Richard was as extortionate as he was extravagant. The oppressions of Edward II. and Henry III., and the vast sums they had contrived to squeeze out of London, were not forgotten. Richard resolved to try one of his ancestors' favourite devices. He sent to borrow 1000*l.* from the citizens. They refused the loan, and, in addition, ill-treated "a certain Lumbard" who would have given the money. John Hinde, the mayor, with his sheriffs, was summoned to Nottingham, and on his arrival arrested and locked up in Windsor Castle, the sheriffs being separated and sent, one to Wallingford and the other to Odiham. This was in May. In August, the citizens, who had found out that "the end of these things was a money matter," resolved to meet the king's demands, and it was arranged that he and his queen should visit London. The people, to the number of four hundred, went out to meet them as far as Wandsworth, and the bishop and his clergy awaited them and joined the procession at St. George's Church in Southwark. At London Bridge two white horses were offered to the king and queen, in trappings of red and white with silver bells. The conduit in Cheap ran with wine, and a child, dressed as an angel, presented them with gold crowns. A "table of the Trinity," in gold, perhaps a bas-relief or an enamel, was given to Richard, and one of

* Earl of Suffolk.



St. Anne to the queen, in honour of her name. Going on to St. Paul's, the procession was met by the choir singing to welcome them, and a solemn mass was performed before the king and queen went on to Westminster.

In addition to the costs of this entertainment London had to pay a fine of 10,000*l.*, and on the 28th February following, a formal patent or charter was granted by which Richard received them back into his favour. It may readily be believed that the citizens, of whatever rank, had now lost the loyal feelings with which they had originally regarded Richard II.; and, as events proved, he was to add another example to those of Henry III. and Edward II. as showing that the favour of London was worth keeping.

Bishop Braybrook and the primate were now much exercised by the universal outbreak of "Lollardry." If we may believe a contemporary poet* Richard himself made a declaration against heretics on the occasion of this visit to the city.† Courtenay had held a synod or conference at the Grey Friars' in the year after Wat Tyler's rebellion, and undeterred by an earthquake which interrupted the proceedings, but which the archbishop adroitly turned in his own favour as showing that the earth would fain shake itself free from false doctrine, he had set up a White Friar at St. Paul's Cross to inveigh against Wycliffe and his "poor priests." In spite of all he could do the new doctrine spread in every direction.‡ Oxford was leavened with it and we may be sure London was not far behind. Wycliffe had died at the end of 1384, and

* 'Political Poems and Songs' (i. 282), edited by Wright for the Rolls series.

† Some readers will remember the curious rhyming line in Richard's epitaph at Westminster :—

"Comburit hæriticos et eorum stravit amicos."

‡ See Green, 'History of English People,' i. 490.

Courtenay had been able to suppress his teaching in the university, but it only spread the more widely, like a pollarded tree. When the pulpit at St. Paul's Cross was occupied by a preacher reputed a Lollard, all the city crowded to hear him. The mayor in 1382 and the following year was more than suspected of favouring the new doctrine, and when his opponent Brember succeeded in procuring his imprisonment we may be sure the fact was not forgotten against him.*

When Richard married his French bride of eight years old, the citizens, with a last effort of expiring loyalty, met the royal procession on Blackheath, and a few days later conducted the queen in state through the city, on which occasion the crowd was so great that the Prior of Tiptree was crushed to death with eight other unfortunate spectators. This ill-omened event was followed shortly afterwards by the death in his mayoralty of Adam Bamme, when the king by an exercise of illegal authority appointed a new mayor. This was the last time a king of England† took the city of London "into his own hands" to use the old phrase. The mayor he thus arbitrarily appointed was none other than the famous Richard Whittington.

The remainder of this reign so far as London is concerned, was a time of deep discontent. The king's extravagance increased daily. He extorted blank charters, or as we should say "cheques" from wealthy citizens and filled them up at his royal pleasure. He borrowed money from every one who came to court, and yet he is reported to have spent 3000 marks on a single dress. The citizens, worn down with taxation, petitioned

* This imprisonment of Northampton is mentioned by Stow, but I have not succeeded in discovering particulars.

† Charles II. did something of the kind, but the difference is pointed out by Norton, p. 118.

that there should be some lightening of their burdens, since the war with France was happily ended by the advent of the little French princess: but the king was so indignant that it was with difficulty that Braybrook and the archbishop pacified him.

Meanwhile Henry, the son of John of Gaunt, had become the idol of the people, who had forgotten their hatred of his father. In the beginning of 1399, the old duke died at Ely Place, in Holborn,* which he had hired after the destruction of the Savoy. His son was in exile. In May of the same year, Richard departed on his Irish expedition. Early in July Henry landed in Yorkshire, and hastened to London, knowing how strong his cause would be if the city favoured him. He was received with joy, and his army supplied with provisions by the citizens. When a little later he brought the wretched king a captive to the Tower, it is said that a body of respectable citizens begged that he might be put to death, but others report that only the lowest rabble wished to assassinate Richard. Henry returned from the Tower and gave thanks in St. Paul's. Braybrook was one of those who took part in Richard's deposition, in the coronation of Henry, and in the subsequent act by which the ex-king was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. All these events happened before the last year of the fourteenth century was out, and in the beginning of the following year Richard's body was brought to London, "in the state of a gentleman,"† and shown to the people in St. Paul's, "that they might believe for certain that he was dead."

With the dirge for Richard, Braybrook's episcopate

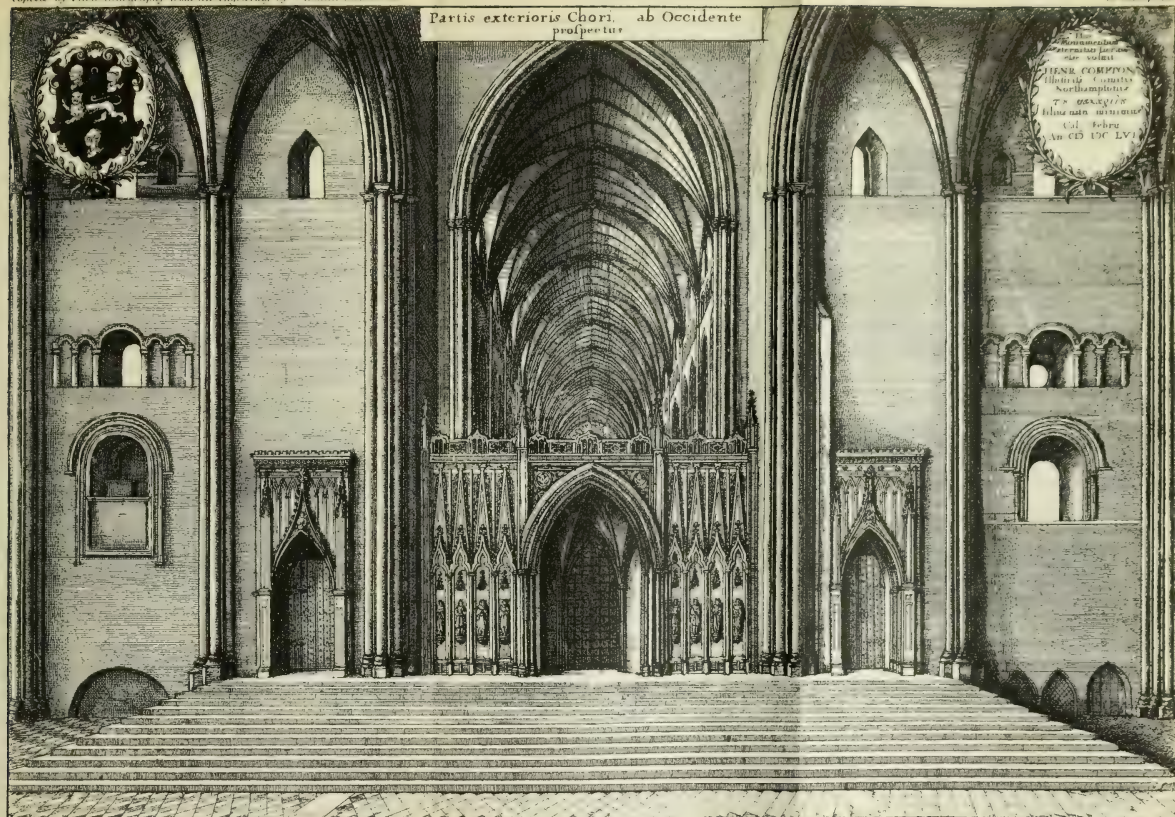
* For an account of Ely Place, see vol. ii. chapter xx.

† See 'Life of Bishop Braybrook,' in London and Middlesex 'Transactions,' vol. iii.

was nearly ended. Yet he survived till the autumn of 1404, when he died, and was buried in the Lady Chapel of his cathedral. After the great fire Pepys records that the bishop's body "fell down in the tomb out of the great church into St. Fayth's." He describes the "skeleton with the flesh on," all tough and dry like spongy leather, the head turned aside, and adds, "a great man in his time and Lord Chancellor ; and his skeleton now exposed to be handled and derided by some, though admired for its duration by others." The disgraceful exhibition continued till the new cathedral was built, when the body was re-interred in the crypt ; where, however, no monument marks its last resting-place.*

* A fine brass was on the tombstone and is engraved by Dugdale. Newcourt makes some interesting remarks on the subject (p. 20):—"One thing more of mine own observation I cannot omit, which is this, viz. though the sculptures in brass were by sacrilegious hands torn away from all the tombs in the church, yet this alone, which was one of the costliest, having the bishop's effigies in brass at length engraved upon it, in his episcopal habit, and his epitaph in brass likewise inscribed about it, was left untouched, till it was buried in the ruins by that dreadful fire, notwithstanding it was the most conspicuous of any ; the lord mayor and his brethren, and the greatest part of the congregation passing over it every Sunday." It would seem, therefore, as if the good bishop's memory was cherished by the citizens until then.

Partis exterioris Chori, ab Occidente
prospicitur



Monumentum
interius in ecclesia
hujus
HIERA CORPUS
Hilarii Comitis
Northamptonie
7. augusti
Johanne ann. mcccc.
Cal. febru.
An. dñi 1364 LVII

Propter Aspari cui deus oritur
M. misram! prosto effigies velut christa treps,
Quam digito infelicis Peter depinxit fidi:
Sicut, non huius a se
Vel sicut prima species sub schismate mentis
Inftar Xarçis! tenentur dissolvit in umbram
Dabit Deus his duas finem.

Scutellus Georg. Bressi

Virg. Georg. Lib. 2.

CHAPTER IX.

YORK AND LANCASTER IN LONDON.

WE have now in our narrative of the city history arrived at a period regarding which innumerable books exist, teeming with information. London was particularly fortunate in having attracted the attention of an acute and patient observer like Stow, before the bloom of the middle ages had been rudely wiped off. He saw it as it was left by Whittington and Large, still but half ruined by Thomas Cromwell and his master, and before the great fire had made it into modern London. That the fire spared Stow's monument in the little church upon Cornhill was only an accident, but amid such widespread destruction, when some of the grandest buildings in Europe were sacrificed, it was perhaps a good omen for the future that the curious terra-cotta figure of the antiquarian tailor still sits where his widow set it in the side aisle of St. Andrew Undershaft. Mr. Thoms has well remarked that "the devouring element, as if pitying his fate, and honouring his labours, spared the monument of him who had so carefully preserved the history of London's greatness."

Stow's general accuracy is remarkable, but when, in our own day, another and almost equally painstaking interpreter of old records arose, a few mistakes and errors were detected. Henry Thomas Riley, whose premature

death was a public loss, obtained access to the original documents on which Stow founded his historical passages, and by publishing them with his own comments has enabled us to correct Stow where it is necessary, and at the same time to form for ourselves a clearer view than has previously been possible of the growth of the municipal institutions. Of London in the fifteenth century it is now easy to conjure up a tolerably distinct impression. The city itself was still greater than its suburbs. Though Westminster, with its new wool staple, its law courts, its royal palace, and its long line of noble villas by the bank of the Thames was rapidly rising into importance, London itself with its bridge, and perhaps on account of its bridge, was still the most populous and the most wealthy. We have traced its gradual growth, the extension of its "wards without," the bridging of the Fleet, the covering of open spaces, the formation of streets in Cheap, the building of halls and churches, and the changes of public opinion regarding the religious orders. By this time the monastic institutions swallowed up a large part of the city itself, and clustered thickly round the gates. The parish churches had in many cases become collegiate, that is, attached to foundations for the residence of priests or monks, and were crowded with chantries and separate altars at which mass was sung for the repose of the souls of generations of wealthy citizens. With all this outward deference to religion it cannot be said that morals had improved, and the records are full of details of crime, in which the idle mendicant friars and the ignorant mass priests take somewhat more than their due share. Although much foreign trade had been lost in the wars of the Edwards, the city was still very wealthy when the first Lancastrian king ascended the throne, and a lively competition and friendly rivalry with Bruges

and Ghent, and with the Hanseatic towns of northern Germany, more than made up for the decline of trade with Bordeaux and the absence of Italian bankers.

The name of Richard Whittington, who was four times mayor in the early years of the century, is as familiar as nursery tales can make it.* The country lad of good family was sent up to London at thirteen to make his fortune. He was accredited to a wealthy mercer, who like himself came from the west country, and taking the oath of industry, obedience, and duty, imposed upon apprentices, entered the office, as we should say, of John Fitz Warren. This must have been about 1371 or 1372, and king Edward was still alive. The boy may have seen the last tournament of the old monarch, and Alice Perrers riding to Cheapside as the Lady of the Sun, and sitting on the balcony where the motherly Philippa had sat when she was a girl queen. He may have watched the rising walls of the "Charter House," and heard from an eye-witness of the burial in the pest-field behind of the 50,000 victims of the great plague. He may have seen the Canterbury pilgrims set out, nay, he may have been acquainted with Geoffrey Chaucer, who was alive till the end of the century. He must have often looked at the gay banners hung out from houses where some great country baron was lodging while parliament sat,† and was probably a spectator of

* Messrs. Besant and Rice, in their charming little account of Whittington and his times, have made extensive use of Riley, but have breathed life into the dry bones, and presented us with a picture as vivid as it is accurate.

† See evidence of Chaucer in the Scrope and Grosvenor Case, p. 178: "Being asked if he knew of any interruption or challenge made by Sir Robert Grosvenor, or by his ancestors, or by any one in his name, to the said Sir Richard (Scrope) or any of his ancestors of that name, he replied that he was on one occasion in Friday Street in London, and as he passed through the street he saw hanging out a new sign made with the said arms, and asked whose town house it was which had hanging without it these arms of Scrope."

the grand mystery play—of the history of the world from its foundation—which the parish clerks gave at Skinner's Well near Clerkenwell, and which lasted eight days, when the most part of the nobles and gentles of England were there to behold it.*

In due time the apprentice† was made free of the mercers' company, which numbered King Richard II. himself among its members: and he seems to have very soon attracted the attention of his sovereign. He had subscribed five marks in 1379 towards the defence of the city, and ten years later he pays 10*l.*, from which we may judge of the prosperity of his affairs in the interval. In 1397 Richard took upon himself to make Whittington mayor on the death of Adam Bamme during his year of office.‡ The arbitrary nature of this step does not seem to have given any offence. The citizens were too much occupied with other and more important affairs. The blank "charts," or cheques, already mentioned, were being signed, and the appointment of a popular merchant was acquiesced in willingly, as is proved by his regular election to serve as mayor again in the following year. There was disquietude in the city. The king's affairs were more and more involved. There was a constant dread of invasion. The river was but half protected, and a few years before a Scots pirate had shown himself off the Nore, and had only been driven away by an expedition fitted out at the cost of a private citizen, Sir John Philpot. There were warm disputes over the elections of aldermen, and new regulations were adopted, which practically placed the power

* Stow, p. 7.

† Messrs. Besant and Rice accept the authenticity of the story of Whittington's first commercial venture with the cat (p. 137).

‡ There is a misprint of 1379 for 1397 in Besant and Rice. The king's writ is in Riley, p. 544, from Letter-book H.

of choice in the hands of the aldermen themselves. Whittington belonged to the retrograde or autocratic party, which now pursued very much the same policy as that of the old oligarchy in days long gone by. Proclamations were made against public meetings, and Whittington, who had been elected alderman of Broad Street Ward, in 1393, is frequently mentioned as assenting to all such repressive measures. He was not mayor the year Henry IV. ascended the throne, but was re-elected in 1406.

Meanwhile, the new Guildhall was fast approaching completion.* The old Guildhall, the place of meeting of the ancient senate of the city from time immemorial, had been situated in Aldermanbury, a street in the ward of Cripplegate, to which it gave a name. Strange to say, we do not know when the old site was abandoned. Some remains of its buildings were still extant in the time of Stow, but as we know that the Guildhall chapel was built in the reign of Edward II., on a site adjoining that of the new Guildhall, it is evident that the removal had then already taken place. Stow speaks of the older hall on this new site as being little better than a cottage. The old hall in Aldermanbury may have been burnt† and a sudden removal may have been rendered necessary : but if so, the removal probably took place before the final arrangement respecting wards, which I have ventured to assign to the government of Sir Ralf Sandwich. That this is likely appears by a glance at the ward map, by which it will be seen that the site of the Guildhall itself is a reservation taken out of the ward of Bassishaw and annexed to that of Cheap. The new site may have

* Riley, p. 545. I am disposed to think that part at least of the beautiful crypt, now so shamefully ill-used, is of older date than the building above.

† Stow says it was a carpenter's yard in his time. History repeats itself. The crypt of the newer Guildhall is a carpenter's yard now.

been chosen, as I have already hinted, on account of the openness of the ground, where, probably, the "haugh" or wooded space surrounding the mansion of the Basings still in part existed. Many other halls were on the same estate. "Bakwellehalle"* closely adjoined the site of the new Guildhall and was appropriated in the mayoralty of Whittington as a mart for the sale of broad cloths. The chapel and Bakwellehall have disappeared, and their place is taken for a bankruptcy court and other civic buildings; but their position may be ascertained by a glance at the accompanying view in a print engraved in the early part of the eighteenth century. The original Guildhall in Aldermanbury must have almost touched the new one, which, however, faced a different way, and this closeness of the two structures, though they were in different parishes, wards, and streets, may be the reason for the absence of any notice of the removal of the corporation from their time-honoured place of meeting.

In order to provide for the new building many expedients were resorted to of a somewhat questionable nature. Thus a payment was imposed upon apprentices; upon persons taking up their freedom, and upon the enrolment of deeds; and fines were imposed on small offenders, who had hitherto stood in the pillory in Cheap or sat in the stocks in the poultry market. A sum of 100*l.* was, moreover, taken from the tolls of London Bridge for six years which should have gone to repairs.

Whittington's second, or to speak more exactly, his third mayoralty was in 1406 and was marked by a return of the plague, of which it was reported that thirty thousand people died. The year must, in fact, have been

* So called from the Banquelles, who succeeded the Cliffords and Basings. The original "manor-house," so to speak, may well have stood on the spot.

one of extreme anxiety. The insecure condition of the kingdom, the king's personal unpopularity, the frequent plots and tumults, and, it may be, disaffection, in the city, are indicated in the numerous executions for high treason, and the subsequent exhibition of traitors' heads on the battlements of the bridge. Another cause of disquietude was the increase of Lollardry ; and the act for burning heretics, which had been passed in 1401, led to consequences the horror of which can hardly have been foreseen. The Black Friars, and indeed all the conventual orders, began to see their influence slipping from them. The ballads and rhymes of the time are full of scurrilous references to their life and conduct. The increase in the number of mass priests, already mentioned, did not tend to the elevation of the secular clergy. Learning declined, and the name of one of the greatest scholars, Duns Scotus, became and remains a synonym for ignorance. The so-called learned men were occupied with absurd quibbles, and the spread of superficial education among the laity, while it helped to discredit the pedantries of the friars and to further Lollardry, also paved the way for the great literary revolution which the century now begun was destined to see before it closed. Meanwhile, the bishops clamoured for an example, and in February, 1401, their first victim, William Sawtree, mass priest, or perhaps curate, of St. Osyth,* suffered the cruel penalty annexed by the new act to "obstinate heresy."†

* Or St. Benet Sherehog, Size Lane. Newcourt points out that John Newton was the parish priest here from 1396 to 1427. Some authorities bring Sawtree from St. Osyth's in Essex, where he may have been the abbot's vicar.

† The Grey Friars' Chronicle simply records :—"That yere a prest was brent in Smythfelde, that was called Sir William Sautre for erysse." "A lollard and an eritik approved afore alle the clergie" (Tyrrell's 'Chronicle'). The spelling of the newly-defined offence does not seem to have yet been settled.

To their surprise the bishops found that so far from crushing out the spirit of the new sect by this barbarity, its constancy rose superior to the flames, and that the behaviour of Sawtree at the stake only encouraged his followers. Parliament, too, when it met, showed some signs of disapproval, and it is among the marvels of the time that the Church did not see the danger it ran in betaking itself to such extreme measures of repression. Sir John Oldcastle,—in right of his wife, Lord Cobham,—was the acknowledged leader of the Lollards, and from his neighbouring estates in Kent was able to succour the sufferers in London. His soldierly qualities endeared him to the king and his son, Prince Henry, while the personal holiness of his life testified to the sincerity of his convictions. For eight years, including that of Whittington's mayoralty, the act was not put in force, but even the lowest rabble must have been horrified at the burning of the second martyr, at which the prince himself assisted. The story is so quaintly told by the chronicler* that we may quote it whole :—"This same year (1409) there was a clerk † that believed not on the sacrament of the altar, that is to say God's body, which was damned and brought into Smithfield to be burnt. And Harry, Prince of Wales, then the king's eldest son, counselled him for to forsake his heresy and hold the right way of holy Church. And the prior of St. Bartholomew's in Smithfield brought the holy sacrament of God's body, with twelve torches' light before, and in this wise came to this cursed heretic : and it was asked him how he believed : and he answered that he believed well that it was hallowed bread and not

* 'Chronicle,' printed in 1827, p. 92. I have, for the most part, modernised the spelling.

† Mr. Green says he was a layman, named Thomas Badby (i. 535).

God's body : and then was the tun put over him and fire kindled therein : and when the wretch felt the fire he cried mercy ; and anon the prince commanded to take away the tun and to quench the fire, the which was done anon at his commandment : and then the prince asked him if he would forsake his heresy and taken him to the faith of holy Church, which if he would do, he should have his life and good enough to live by : and the cursed shrew would not, but continued forth in his heresy, wherefore he was burnt."

On the accession of Henry V. these horrors became more, rather than less, frequent. With some difficulty the new king was persuaded to commit Lord Cobham, his old companion in arms, to the Tower, whence, however, he very soon escaped and commenced to organise his followers and take measures for an armed rising. Meanwhile there was a great convocation of the clergy at St. Paul's which lasted a fortnight,* and when it was over, Archbishop Arundel and many other bishops called the people together on Sunday at the cross, and solemnly accursed Sir John Oldcastle and all his supporters. Immediately after Christmas the rising began. Suspicious bodies of men were to be seen assembling among the thickets between London and St. Giles'. On the 8th January, 1414, the king and his brothers and the bishops took the field against the rebels, whom they found in great force beyond St. Giles' "between Westminster and the highway toward Tyburn."† The first person they took up proved to be a squire of Oldcastle's, and they seem thereupon to have arrested wholesale all the passengers they met on the road. No resistance

* It assembled on St. Edmund's Day (20th Nov.) and sat "tyl the iiij day of Decembre," 1413.

† This circumstantial account is in Tyrrell's 'Chronicle,' p 97. For the ancient topography of the district, see vol. ii. chapter xxi.

seems to have been made, but thirty-seven poor wretches were committed, some to the Tower and some to Newgate, and on the morrow they were hanged in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and their bodies burnt. We hear of no formal trial: of no identification of the prisoners: nor are we told that they had arms in their hands: but the chronicler no doubt reflects the scare which was in men's minds when he says, "these men were arisers against the king," adding, "and certainly the said Sir John Oldcastle with great multitude of Lollards and heretics were purposed with full will and might for to have destroyed the king and his brethren, which be protectors and defenders of holy Church, and them also that be in degree of holy order in the service of God and of his Church, the which will and purpose, as God would, was let." It is evident that we see here the elements of a religious war at work. Fanaticism and superstition were busily employed. Whether Oldcastle's designs were treasonable or not, they were put down with a ferocity begotten of terror. When he was taken in "the march of Wales," namely, in his native Monmouthshire, he was put to death with even greater cruelty than that shown to his followers. London was the headquarters of "heretykes" and "Lollards,"* and he was accordingly drawn through the London streets to the gallows at St. Giles,† "and he was hanged be a cheyne of iron, and was brent up galawes and alle."

While these tragical scenes were being enacted, London was plunged into a whirl of agitation of another kind by news of the victory of Agincourt. War, as usual,

* Tyrrell, p. 106.

† There has been some conflict of opinion as to the spot on which he suffered, but the 'English Chronicle,' edited by Mr. Davies for the Camden Society, expressly mentions "Sent Gilis feld."

brought with it financial excitement, and enormous fortunes were rapidly accumulated by some of the leading mercantile firms. Centuries have not dissipated the estates bequeathed to their descendants by some of the contemporaries of Whittington. Among the city lists of the magnates of the time we meet with the names of men whose posterity are now in the first ranks of the peerage. And Whittington himself profited like the rest. He is said to have burnt bonds worth 60,000*l.* before the king on his return, a by no means improbable story. No doubt he had made more by the king's want of money for his campaigns, and these very bonds, though they may have represented a royal debt, were probably by no means worth their nominal value. In 1419, the year of the king's marriage with Katherine of France, he was mayor for the last time, but if he died in the following year, as has been asserted, it is impossible that as mayor he can have entertained the king and queen, for they did not come to England till Candlemas,* the king entering London "upon seynt Valentyne's day,"† and the queen on the 21st of the same month of February, 1420, when he was out of office, if not dead. But his death is placed by some authorities ‡ in 1423, which is more probable, being the year in which his will was proved by John Coventry, John White, William Grove, and John Carpenter. The munificent gifts he had made to the city in his lifetime were continued after his death. In addition to the college for priests, in St. Michael, Paternoster Royal,

* Feb. 2nd.

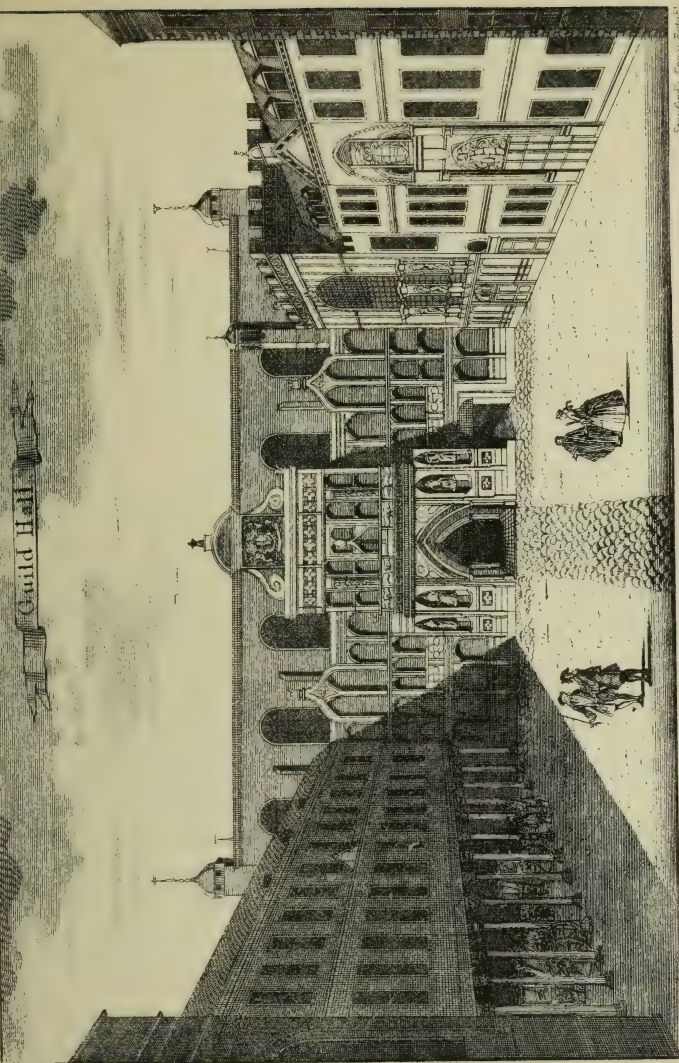
† Tyrrell, p. 108.

‡ Besant and Rice, p. 174. Mr. Brewer says ('Life of Carpenter,' p. 23) that Whittington's will was made in September, 1421, and proved in 1423. The king's licence for rebuilding Newgate prison was obtained on the 23rd May.

which he founded, he exemplified the new interest in literature by his gifts of books to the Grey Friars, where a building, on the site of the present hall, was erected to receive his library, and to the Guildhall. The executors, moreover, pulled down and rebuilt the prison of Newgate adjoining the gate, which with a great part of the city wall had been repaired in 1415. The gate, indeed, was wholly new, and seems to have been placed a little to the south of the original site, whence its somewhat misleading name. The old "Chamberlain's Gate" was probably on the same spot as the Roman entrance from the Watling Street, of which the remains have been found in our own day.

Whittington or his executors have also the credit of founding the first city library. It consisted of a very considerable stock of books, and Stow says they erected a "fair and large library" for it and for the other manuscripts belonging to the corporation, adjoining closely to the Guildhall chapel. In the reign of Edward VI., his uncle, the Protector Somerset, sent for the books, and carried them away in "three carres," promising to restore them shortly. But the promise was never fulfilled, and London, till our own day, was left without a library. New and restored buildings for St. Bartholomew's Hospital, the pavement and glazing of the new Guildhall, the stocks market, where the Mansion House now stands, the opening of "drinking bosses," or taps, in the public conduits, and an almshouse for thirteen poor men, which still subsists,* were among the objects to which his wealth was devoted. His example was followed by many other public-spirited citizens, and all generations of Londoners have been taught from their infancy to revere the name of Whittington.

* On Highgate Hill.



London: Edward Staunford, 55 Charing Cross.

Staunford's Pen. Engr.

Carpenter,* his executor, also deserves a few lines of remembrance. He was of a very different character from the merchant princes with whom he associated and was one of the first writers and readers of whom we know that, though in a sense a clerk, he was not in orders. He was appointed town clerk or "secretary of the city" in 1417, and is immortalised by the composition of the famous "*Liber Albus*," or "*White Book*" of London records, which has proved so valuable to the historian.† Like Sir Thomas More at a later period he was a lay brother of the Charterhouse, and seems indeed to have been attached to other ecclesiastical fraternities, but without taking orders. He is venerated as the first founder of the city school, and seems, like Neel, the master of St. Thomas of Acons,‡ and other enlightened men of the day, to have been anxious in the cause of education. The printing press had not yet been invented, but men's minds were being prepared for the outburst of the new learning which the end of the century was to see. Two years before Carpenter's death, his friend Robert Large, the mercer, was mayor; and among Large's apprentices was a boy from Kent, whose name was destined to become at least as famous as that of Whittington himself. When we come to mention Caxton, it seems as if the clouds of the middle ages were already rolling away, and the new light of the renaissance breaking at once upon the page. But ere Large's apprentice had become master of the "*English nation*" at Bruges, and had learnt the wondrous art from Colard Mansion, London had to suffer many things, to see the hero of Agincourt on his bier, to witness the fall of the

* '*Life of John Carpenter*,' by Thomas Brewer. London, 1856.

† It was printed in the original Latin for the Rolls Series in 1859, and translated by Mr. Riley for the corporation in 1861.

‡ Whose school survived as the Mercers'. See above, p. 114.

fated house of Lancaster, and to be, in particular, the scene of the ambitious plots of Richard of Gloucester.

Before the death of Henry V., and during the mayoralty of Sir Henry Barton in 1416, the lighting of the streets with lamps was made compulsory. On the 13th August, 1422, a weathercock was set on the steeple of St. Paul's. King Henry died during the course of the same month, his body passed in solemn procession through the city in the November following, and nearly a year later an almost equally melancholy procession took its place. Could the citizens have foreseen the troubles coming on the kingdom, no appearance would have been more sad than that of the infant Henry VI. in 1423. The widowed queen and her little son set out from Windsor for London on Saturday (the 13th November). They rested at Staines, and on the morrow the king was being carried toward his mother's chair in order to continue the journey when "he shrieked and cryed and sprang and wolde nought be caryed forthere : wherefore he was borne ayeyne into the inne and there he bood the Soneday al day."* It seemed as if the infant king foresaw the misery he was to endure in the city to which he was being taken for the first time. On Wednesday the cavalcade passed through London, and the boy "with a glad chere sate in his modres lappe in the chare."† Then the baby king's uncles led him into St. Paul's, where he was made to kneel at the altar: When we think of the tall columns and overarching vault, of the wide marble steps, the lofty canopy, and the poor little child, barely two years old, "looking gravely and sadly about him," as if feeling already the weight of two usurped crowns,

* Tyrrell, 'Chronicle,' p. 112.

† Tyrrell, p. 165. Miss Yonge ('Cameos,' ii. 353) and others have mentioned a tall white horse on which the queen sat bearing the child.

as he crouched by himself in the midst, it is hardly possible to call up any scene in our history more pathetic.

The streets of London immediately became the battlefield of rival factions. Gloucester, the regent, was personally popular. "Good Duke Humfrey" is not even yet altogether forgotten. Though his grave is in St. Alban's Abbey, a tomb in old St. Paul's was appropriated to him by the people, and his tragical fate made the deepest impression on the citizens. We read that during the mayoralty of Sir John Coventry in 1426, he warned the city of a design to seize it which had been formed by his rival, the bishop of Winchester. Shops were shut, men-at-arms called out, the gates locked, and the bishop's adherents were successfully excluded. This is an example of the state of things which prevailed more or less for nearly fifty years. A very brief summary of them will suffice. The young king was crowned at Paris in 1429, and coming to London was met on Blackheath with great ceremony and conducted through the city to Westminster by the mayor and chief citizens. A few years later, on the breaking out of war between England and the Duke of Burgundy, not only did the city furnish and maintain a contingent for the defence of Calais, but, what is not so pleasant to record, the people in London rose and murdered a number of Flemings and other subjects of the duke who had been trading here. In January, 1437, the body of queen Katharine, the widow of Henry V., rested at St. Paul's on its way from Bermondsey Abbey, where she had died, to Westminster. Her second husband, Owen Tudor, was actually at the time a prisoner in Newgate, hard by, and in the course of the following year broke out, "hurtyng fowle his keper, but at the last," adds the chronicler,* piously, "blessyd

* 'Chronicle,' printed 1827, by Ed. Tyrrell, p. 123.

be God, he was taken ayeyn." What the poor man had done to deserve imprisonment history sayeth not. The same year that saw queen Katharine's death saw also that of the widow of Henry IV., Joanna of Navarre, who had been accused of sorcery during the reign of her stepson. It has been suggested that for "sorcery" we should read "lollardry," which is very possible, but the case of the duchess of Gloucester, notwithstanding that her maiden name had been Cobham, was one of simple superstitious belief in witchcraft. It can, in fact, hardly be doubted that when the wretched lady was charged with having endeavoured "to consume the king's body by negromancie," she at least believed in the possibility of such a thing, and the people believed that she had attempted the dreadful deed. She confessed, and was condemned to penance. Being sent from Westminster by water, she walked, with only a "keverchef" on her head, through "Fletstrete" to St. Paul's, where she offered a taper of wax weighing two pounds. This was on Monday, the 13th November. The following Wednesday she performed her dismal walk from the Swan in Thames Street—Swan Wharf still survives—through Bridge Street and Gracechurch Street to Leadenhall, and "so to Crichurche," that is, St. Katharine Cree, near Aldgate. Again on Friday, in like manner, she landed at Queenhithe, walked through Cheap, and on to St. Michael's, Cornhill. At each place where she landed, the mayor, sheriffs and crafts met her and accompanied her pilgrimage. Her chaplain was hanged, and she herself was sent into perpetual imprisonment, it is said, in the Isle of Man. A few years later the "good duke Humfrey," her husband, was murdered at Bury St. Edmunds, and within eight weeks his rival, cardinal Beaufort, followed him to the grave ; leaving England a legacy of

disunion and strife which was not allayed till a whole generation had passed away.

As an example of the city life of the time, we may take the story of the widow of Aldgate, of which some particulars have survived. She found a poor Breton, who had perhaps wandered over with the followers of Joan of Navarre, who, when she married Henry IV., was dowager duchess of Brittany. The widow, out of charity, took him home to her house and treated him kindly. In return, he murdered her and carried off all she possessed. Being detected, he fled across the river to Southwark, and took sanctuary. On one or two occasions the mayor and sheriffs had invaded sanctuary, as, for example, when a soldier in 1439 got safe into St. Martin-le-Grand, while actually on his way to be hanged, but they had been obliged by the fulminations of holy Church to give up their prey.* The Breton was starved out, but, in accordance with the ecclesiastical rule, he was allowed to go, on condition of forswearing the realm, and departing to Dover, and across the sea as quickly as possible.† “Bareheaded, barefooted, ungirt, a white cross placed in his hand, he was sent forth on his painful pilgrimage.” But though he had escaped the law, “as he went his way it happed him to come by the same place where he had done that cursed deed, and women of the same parish came out with stones and dirt, and there made an end of him in the high street, so that he went no further, notwithstanding the constables and other men also which

* Kempe, ‘St. Martin-le-Grand,’ p. 117. The contemporary report is very quaint:—“There came out (of) the Panyer-Aley, five of his fellowship, not being of your franchises, but strangers, betwix the Bocherie and the Bole, hed and bereft from the said officer the foresaid sowdeor, with daggers drawn, and brought him with them into the Sanctuarie,” &c. The Bowl was probably a tavern. The soldier’s name was Knight.

† See Palgrave, ‘The Merchant and the Friar,’ p. 189, for an account of the usage on these occasions.

had him under their governance to conduct him forward, for there was a great company of the women, and they had no mercy, no pity.”*

The meagreness of the city annals during this reign would be extreme but for the rebellion of Cade, one of the strangest events we meet with in all London history. Who Cade was, what he wanted, how he contrived to make himself leader of the regular Kentish levies, and to overawe the city for so many weeks, and why his power so suddenly collapsed, we shall probably never know. Our acquaintance, too, with the state of the civic parties is of the slightest. There are indications now and then of the existence of political views. Some of the city rulers are more popular than others. There is occasionally a sign of emotion among those below, of repression by those above : a reference, too vague to tell us much, to the existence of “the commons.” In short, the old days of isolation were past. The citizens of London were no longer a peculiar people, dwelling in a close-walled town, surrounded by fordless morasses and impenetrable forests. They could no longer indulge in political rivalries which did not concern any one but themselves. The old days of Fitz-Thedmar and his chronicle, in which London is described as a kingdom within a kingdom, self-contained, self-governing, were gone for ever. The suburbs took the citizens far into Middlesex. Southwark was directly under their governance. They lived in villas at Stepney and even at Tyburn. London had become part of England : and already the old patriotism of the citizens to their city was growing weak. It is difficult, once the first half of the fifteenth century has been reached, to dissociate the history of London from the history of

* Modernised from Tyrrell, ‘Chronicle,’ p. 117.

Westminster, or of St. Giles's, or of Southwark ; and though the old bounds are still set, and the old walls, by a kind of fiction, are still standing, London entered a new stage of existence before the last king of the house of Edward III. had ascended his blood-stained throne.

The Kentish men, disgusted like every one else at the misgovernment of the kingdom, had been foremost in the deposition and assassination of the weak king's weak minister, Suffolk. In 1450 they wanted a leader, and Cade offered himself. He was an old soldier, and knew how to organise an army. Calling himself Mortimer, he led some twenty thousand men over the wooded hills of Dartford to the Thames, and encamping at Blackheath, issued his orders and levied his contributions on the city for a month, during which the king fled to Kenilworth, and the city magistrates seem to have been simply paralysed with fear. Of the mayor, Thomas Chalton, we hear absolutely nothing, except that after Cade had defeated the king's general near Sevenoaks, and had returned and made his head-quarters at the White Hart in Southwark, he called a meeting of the common council, at which was debated, not the question how to oppose the rebel, but whether he was to be allowed to enter the city. The lower classes it is evident sympathised with Cade. He promised them immunity from taxation and all the other benefits which every leader of the kind has always offered to the credulity of the populace. He demanded and obtained contributions, but ordered that they should be levied on the foreign merchants only. The archbishop of Canterbury and other great men had interviews with him, in which they were surprised at his discretion, but they naturally could not persuade him to retire or to lay down his command. Robert Horne alone among the aldermen seems to have

had the courage to counsel resistance ; and the very day that the citizens had met, the rebel army entered by London Bridge. Cade immediately disarmed the resentment of the commons at this proceeding by frequent proclamations to his soldiers forbidding violence or robbery : he was somewhat absurdly attired in a "pair of brigandines," with gilt spurs, a gilt tilting helmet, and a gown of blue velvet, with his sword borne before him, "as he had been a lord or a knight,"* and coming westward along the old line of the Watling Street, he struck his sword upon London Stone, and exclaimed, "Now is Mortimer lord of this city."

This moderation did not last long. On the following day (3rd July) he again entered the city, having retired to Southwark for the night. He repaired to Guildhall, where the trembling mayor and aldermen were assembled. Here he ordered them to bring Lord Say† from the Tower,‡ and to arraign him before the mayor and the king's judges who were then sitting. Robert Horne was summoned at the same time, but escaped on his wife's payment of 500 marks for his liberty. Say desired to be tried by his peers, but the impatient rebel, taking him forcibly from the custody of the city officers, dragged him into Cheap and beheaded him in company with a thief and murderer named Hawarden, Say's body being stripped and dragged naked through the streets, so that, as the chronicler declares, the flesh clave to the stones all the way from Cheap to Southwark. A former sheriff of Kent, Crowmer, who was Say's son-in-law, and

* 'English Chron.' (Cam. Soc.), p. 66.

† Sir James Fiennes. He lived at Knole, and is called "lord lieutenant" in Mr. Cooper's account of the affair in 'Archæologia Cantiana,' vol. vi.

‡ On the outbreak of the rebellion Say, who had been Lord Chamberlain, was committed to the Tower by the king.

had been committed to the Fleet on account of a complaint of extortion in his shrievalty, was taken out to Mile-end and handed over to a party of Essex rebels, when he speedily shared the fate of Say. Their heads were borne on poles and set up on London Bridge. Cade dined, when this bloody work was accomplished, at a citizen's house, and robbed his host of "great substance," the next day doing the same at another house. This was Saturday, 5th July. The city mob, always glad to see rich men plundered, were now all on his side, but at length the mayor and aldermen woke up. They sent to Lord Scales, who still held the Tower, though he had not been able to save Lord Say, and concerted measures with him for the protection of the city. On the morrow, being Sunday, Cade seems to have rested on his laurels, merely beheading a man in Southwark; but in the evening some of his soldiers seeking to enter the city, found their passage opposed at the bridge. Cade came to see what was the matter, and drove the citizens back to the very foot of the bridge, and killed or drowned an alderman and several other people. The brave citizens, however, held out all night; "ever they kept them upon the bridge, so that the citizens passed never-much the bulwark of the bridge foot, nor the Kentish men no further than the drawbridge." At last, about ten* in the morning, the rebels "withdrowe thaym litille and litille," a kind of truce being patched up for a few hours, and the archbishop, again advancing, and taking on himself to issue a general pardon, Jack Cade and his followers withdrew, the leader to Queenborough, whence he hoped to escape to the continent with his plunder, which he had sent to Rochester by water, going by land himself; and the people to their forests and furnaces in

* Tyrrell's 'Chronicle' says nine, and the Cam. Soc. 'Chronicle,' ten.

the hills of Kent and Sussex. The rebellion collapsed. It was, as Mr. Green* and others have pointed out, one wave of a great tide of public movement throughout England, but, so far as London is concerned, the incident ends with the elevation of Cade's head to the place previously occupied by those of Say and Crowmer on London Bridge.

Meanwhile the kingdom was being gradually aroused to the fact of the existence of Richard of York, the heir of the line of Edward III. He had no position and asserted none, in respect of the crown, which had been confirmed by parliament to Henry IV., a descendant it is true of a junior branch, but claiming in the male line, while York, had he made any claim, could only have done so through the Mortimer family, whose heir he had lately become. The Mortimers had, by the marriage of Edmund, third earl of March, with the daughter of Lionel of Antwerp, inherited his position as the third of king Edward's four sons, while Henry VI. only represented John, the fourth son. But York, in addition, was, by his father's side, descended from Edmund of Langley, the fifth son of Edward III., and was thus as much a Plantagenet as his cousin the king.†

The side which London would take in the coming contest was to determine its result. Up to 1452 the city was loyal to Henry. York had marched up from the west with a large army, and hoped the gates would have been opened to him. But entrance being denied, he crossed the Thames at Kingston, and took up a posi-

* i. 564. The Camden Society's 'Chronicle,' quoted above, says that Cade was wounded unto the death and carried in a cart towards London, and "be the wey he deide."

† The only occasions on which this surname was used in the family were when this duke began to set up pretensions to the crown, and when Edward IV. bestowed it on his bastard son, Arthur.

tion at Dartford, the royal army being at Blackheath. His rival in the king's councils was Beaufort, duke of Somerset, and a kind of armed truce having been patched up, York attended in St. Paul's on the 10th March and took an oath of allegiance to Henry VI. In the following year an event occurred which obliged him to declare his intentions. The queen, after eight years of marriage without issue, gave birth to a son at Westminster. The king at the time was sunk in the stupor of insanity. He could take no steps to recognise the prince as his heir, and Warwick, who was destined to become so famous as the "king maker," actually ascended the pulpit at St. Paul's Cross, and proclaimed to the citizens the illegitimacy of the queen's infant. The child, whose birth had taken place on the feast of the Translation of St. Edward the Confessor, was christened by the name of that saint, and when the king recovered he was duly recognised. York seems to have disavowed the action of Warwick, and when he became protector it was specially stipulated that he should only continue in office during the prince's minority. The events of the next few years belong to the general history of the kingdom, and though Warwick frequently resided in his house, the site of which in Newgate Street is still indicated by Warwick Lane,* he does not appear to have interfered to any appreciable extent in civic affairs. York also occasionally resided in the city, at his house in Baynard's Castle, by the Thames' side. He was now, and remained, during the rest of his life, supreme in London, where his popularity was unbounded. In 1451, a Yorkist army occupied the city. Warwick's followers amounted to six hundred men, all clothed in red, with the old Beauchamp badge, the ragged staff, in white. The

* Previously Old Dean's Lane.

white rose had been adopted by the soldiers of York, although it appears previously to have been a badge of the Nevils. The famous scene in the Temple Gardens had been enacted some years before, when Warwick had assigned the rose to "Plantagenet." Shakespeare has taken some liberties with chronology in his famous version of the story.* But it is to be observed that Cicely Nevil, Warwick's sister, was the wife of York. In short, during these years of confusion and warfare, London was a Yorkist camp, and her streets must have been constantly animated by the tramp of liveried men-at-arms, and the clank of knights in harness. At every corner fluttered banners of heraldic tinctures, and the retainers of country lords, each dressed in the livery colours of his master, lounged at the gates of the hostels. The mayor and sheriffs trembled for the peace of the city.† Special precautions were taken. Five thousand citizens were under arms. At night a patrol of a thousand men attended each of three alderman as a watch till seven o'clock in the morning. They marched we are told,‡ "owte of Newgate, and soe up Holborne and downe Chauncery lanne and thorow Fletstret and in at Ludgate and thorow Temstret, and soo to the Tower of London, and soe forthe home agayne." The Somerset party was absolutely refused admission. After the first battle of St. Alban's, in 1455, where Somerset was slain, the duke of York conducted the king to London. And now the feeling of the city was apparent. The victors were received in triumph with a grand procession. The duke conducted the king to the house of the bishop

* First part of 'Henry VI.,' act 2, sc. 4.

† See further particulars in Mr. Gairdner's 'Introduction to the Paston Letters,' vol. i., p. cxxxi.

‡ 'Grey Friars Chronicle,' p. 20.

at St. Paul's, as Leicester had conducted Henry III. nearly two centuries before.* Shortly after, the king was allowed to retire to Hertford.

A short peace ensued, but the troubles were only beginning. One of the contemporary authorities† complains bitterly of the state of affairs in the city. The king's debts increased daily, yet payment there was none. The hearts of the people were turned away from them that had the land in governance. Commerce must have suffered grievously. The Flemings had been alienated as we have seen. Normandy and the French possessions, except Calais, had been lost. But Warwick held Calais firmly, and attacking a Spanish fleet took some rich prizes. He defeated an attempt of the Lancastrian party to oust him, and at the climax of the war landed at Sandwich, and conducting with himself the young earl of March, sent a herald to know how London was disposed. "They that were not friendly to the earls counselled the mayor and the commonalty for to lay guns at the bridge for to keep them out, and so a little division there was among the citizens, but it was soon ceased." Twelve aldermen went out and assured the earls of a welcome, and on the 2nd July, 1460, they entered London. A convocation at St. Paul's was turned into a political meeting. Warwick once more harangued the people on behalf of March and himself, setting forth the misrule of the king's government, but avowing loyalty to his person, and expressing their determination "to declare and excuse their innocence or else to die in the field." Warwick then made his father, Salisbury, ruler of the city, and set forth to meet the royal army at Northampton, taking March, and the pope's legate, the

* After the battle of Lewes in 1264.

† 'English Chronicle,' Cam. Soc., p. 79.

archbishop of Canterbury, and other high dignitaries with him. Meanwhile the citizens under Salisbury blockaded the Tower, in which some Lancastrians had taken refuge. The besieged "cast wild fire into the city, and shot in small guns, and burned and hurt men and women and children in the streets. And they of London laid great bombards on the further side of the Thames against the Tower, and crased the walls thereof in divers places." When the battle of Northampton had been fought and won by the Yorkists, and Henry was back a prisoner once more in the bishop's palace, the Tower surrendered "for lack of vytayl," and some of its defenders were put to death, but their leader, Lord Scales, attempted to escape into sanctuary at Westminster. He entered a boat with three rowers, but was recognised by a woman, and pursued by a number of boatmen, who fell upon him in mid-stream, killed him, and cast his body on the Surrey shore by the church of St. Mary Overey. "And great pity it was," says the chronicler, "that so noble and so worshipful a knight, and so well approved in the wars of Normandy and France, should die so mischievously:" a lament which might have been uttered over many a victim of that dreadful time.

Henry was not kept long in London, but was allowed to cross to his manors at Greenwich and Eltham. In October, parliament settled the reversion of the crown on the duke of York, and again for a brief season there was peace. But before the end of the year the fighting was renewed, and in a way disastrous to the cause the Londoners favoured. On the last day of December the queen's army defeated and killed the duke of York at Wakefield, and a few days later the earl of Salisbury was beheaded by the people of Pontefract. A second battle took place at St. Alban's, and Warwick was forced to retire upon London.

The Londoners, meanwhile, dreading the queen's vengeance and hearing that she had promised her northern soldiers the sack of the city, sent envoys entreating her favour, at the same time, however, shutting the gates against certain men-at-arms, whom she had sent on before her. March had been fighting in the west, where he had defeated a gathering of Lancastrians, and put to death, among others, Owen Tudor, who, old as he was, had done good service in the cause of his stepson. The queen and her army, joined by the poor king after the battle at St. Alban's, turned back from London on hearing that Warwick and March had effected a junction. The citizens, free for the moment from apprehension, welcomed Edward of York with acclamation. He reached London on the 28th February, and proceeded to his mother's house at Baynard's Castle, where the citizens crowded to his standard clamouring to be led against the slayers "of the noble duke Richard, his father." A council of lords was summoned. Henry was declared to have forfeited the crown, and the people were summoned to a great meeting to signify their will. The Cheap was no longer available for a folk-mote. But they assembled in thousands in Smithfield and the open space northward towards Clerkenwell, known as St. John's Field, and being asked if they would have the young earl for their king, the air was filled with the old cry of "Yea, Yea!" and London elected Edward IV. as it had elected so many of his predecessors.

After Edward's marriage, his policy, no longer directed exclusively by Warwick, was nevertheless unswerving in its favour towards the Londoners. The alliance with Burgundy in 1467, which opened again a vast trade between England and the Low Countries, was extremely welcome to the city merchants. Edward himself engaged in commercial ventures, and sent his own

wool to Flanders. During the troubles between him and Warwick, when for a time he was driven out and the wretched Henry once more set upon his throne, London stood by her elected king. The battle of Barnet was won by the help of the citizens. Henry, his feet tied to his stirrups, was led three times round the pillory in Cheap and consigned to the Tower. While Edward was absent in the west, an old adherent of Warwick's, the bastard Falconbridge, marched through Kent and assaulted London, burning the houses on the bridge. He could not obtain an entrance, however, and having only succeeded in setting Aldgate on fire, had to fall back before the resistance of the citizens. Peace was proclaimed after the fatal fight at Tewkesbury, which, so far as Edward was concerned, not only concluded the war, but rid him of every possible rival, friend or enemy.

King Edward returned in triumph once more: the mayor, Stockton, accompanied by the aldermen and sheriffs, one of whom was the famous John Crosby,* went out with a vast multitude to the fields beyond Islington to meet him, and on the highway he knighted them, to the number of twelve, including the recorder. The same night saw the last act of the dismal tragedy of Henry of Lancaster. He was found dead in his lodging in the Tower, of "pure displeasure and melancholy" said the Yorkists, of poison said others.† The next day his body was brought to St. Paul's and shown to the people. Was any old man present to recall the day when, eight-and-forty years before, Henry, as a little child, had kneeled in royal loneliness before the altar of the same church?

* Crosby was never mayor.

† Shakespeare makes Gloucester stab him. ('Henry VI.,' 3rd part, act v. sc. vi.)



CHAPTER X.

SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON.

FROM the accession of Edward IV. a change comes over our city annals. The civic constitution was now settled. The outermost ring of suburbs had been enclosed. The last touches had been put to the fabric over which rival aldermen and common councillors had contended for centuries. The city had become venerable. Her citizens had begun "to think upon her stones." The repair of the Roman wall, carried out in 1476, is one of the first examples of the modern idea of "restoration," namely, a falsification of the history of a building. The first of the long series of London antiquaries, the first dramatist who was to illustrate her history, her people, her streets, for readers of all generations, were not yet born, but their time was drawing very nigh, and the printing-press was already at work. Fortunately for us, the old associations had begun to be studied before Cromwell and the Fire came to obliterate them. Stow has made the stage and painted the scenery, and Shakespeare has put in the figures. The antiquary conducts us through the narrow lanes, among the crumbling courts, under the overhanging gables, into falling priories and empty aisles. The dramatist sets Henry before us marching to Agincourt; he makes Richard plot in Crosby Place; Nym and Bardolph carouse for him in Eastcheap; at "a hall in Blackfriars" the two cardinals sit under the king as

judges. Even when Shakespeare lays his scene in Illyria, or at Verona or Messina, the watchmen are from the London streets, the palaces are London houses, Dogberry himself is a tradesman upon Cornhill. In writing the plays which relate to London in those times, he could speak of what was actually before his eyes. The Wars of the Roses were not more remote from him, than the Scots' rebellion is from us. He stood, with respect to the sad story of Henry VI., nearly as we stand to that of George III. London had not altered so much since Gascoigne, and Falstaff, and Dame Quickly walked the streets, as it has now since the Gordon riots. Shakespeare saw it as Stow, who was his contemporary, saw it. It is more than probable that the antiquary * often passed before his eyes, "tall of stature, lean of body and face, his eyes small and crystalline," yet sober, mild, and "courteous to any that required his instructions." He may have seen Shakespeare at the *Mermaid*, and recognised his genius. Stow knew Ben Jonson well, who says of him that he had monstrous observation. He jested with poverty, being "of his craft a tailor." He always went about on foot, and travelled "to divers cathedral churches, and other chief places of the land, to search records." Yet he was merry, as was Shakespeare, and made epigrams. One of them is on the size of Sir Christopher Hatton's tomb, and the absence of any memorial of Philip Sidney and Francis Walsingham. He "annal'd for ungrateful men," and died at eighty, no richer than he had lived.

Of Shakespeare's personal history, we hardly know as much as we do of Stow's. But the few meagre facts that have been gleaned about him chiefly relate to

* Thoms's 'Stow,' p. xii.

London.* His rare signature appears to a London deed, now exhibited in the Museum at the Guildhall. His theatre was at "the Gloabe on the Banckeside," a not very reputable locality. He was part owner of a "messenger" in Blackfriars. He alludes to Whitefriars in his play of 'Richard III.,' and mentions London Stone in 'Henry VI.' A letter was addressed to him in Carter Lane, the main thoroughfare to Ludgate, where he lodged at the *Bell*. He bought a house near Puddle Dock, in Blackfriars, in 1612. The *Mermaid*, in Cheapside, has long disappeared, but there can be no doubt of its site in the block of buildings between Friday Street and Bread Street, with an entrance from each side. His plays were published in St. Paul's Churchyard, at the "Signe of the Floure de Leuse and the Crown," or at the *Green Dragon*, or at "the Foxe," and some of them in Fleet Street, "under the diall" of St. Dunstan's Church.

What London was like then, we may gather from a third source. Norden was born of a good family, in Wiltshire, about 1548.† He was therefore, the contemporary of both Stow and Shakespeare. He lived chiefly at Hendon, in Middlesex, and was employed as a land surveyor. His accounts of Hertfordshire and of Middlesex were part of a projected work, which he never completed. His map of London was drawn in 1593. There had been previous maps of the kind, bird's-eye

* The "New Shakspeare Society" have done good work for lovers of Shakespeare's London, in publishing Harrison's 'Description of England in Shakspeare's Youth,' together with Norden's map, Mr. Wheatley's valuable notes on it, and the extracts from Perlin and Hentzner, and others. In the following pages I make continual use of this book, and acknowledge my obligation gratefully once for all.

† 'Shakspeare's England,' New Shakspeare Society, p. xc. Mr. Wheatley's notes on Norden's map.

views, in fact, such as that of Ralph Agas, which is believed to have been made about 1570, but the earliest copy known was printed after the accession of James I. There is also a small view-map in Braun and Hogenberg's 'Cities of the World,' which must have been drawn before 1561, as it shows the steeple of St. Paul's, burnt in that year. The first, however, on which full reliance can be placed, is Norden's, which represents the city only, at a definite date, 1593. We see in it both Holborn Bridge and Fleet Bridge: Moorfields had been lately drained, but were not built over. The old hospital still stands in Spitalfields. St. Clare's Nunnery is outside Aldgate. Essex House, or Leicester House, is outside the Temple. Burbage's Theatre was placed in Blackfriars* when the map was three years old. Close by, Baynard's Castle with its gables still remained as it was when Cicely, duchess of York, the "proud" mother of Edward IV., had lived in it when she visited London. Another great mansion may also be identified. This is Pulteney's, or Pountney's Inn, also called Cold Harbour, which has already been mentioned. Richard III. gave it to the Heralds, whom he had incorporated, but after the battle of Bosworth it was occupied by the mother of the new king.†

With Stow and Norden, Shakespeare's London should be sufficiently familiar to us. By Shakespeare's London I do not mean only the London in which the great dramatist moved; but that of which, having the scene before him, he wrote, and in which his characters had

* Its site is still marked by Playhouse Yard, behind the *Times* office.

† A foreign map, by Ryther of Amsterdam, published in 1604, closely resembles Norden's, but being much larger and clearer I have preferred to have it copied, the more so as Norden's map has been copied very often. Ryther's map, in two editions, is in the Crace collection at the British Museum, Nos. 31 and 32.

moved. To a mind like his, the actual scene of a great event must have been a direct incentive to clearness of description ; just as we could realise the burial of queen Anne and queen Katharine, and so make a step towards realising their execution, when we saw the actual ground in which they were so carelessly laid, with its broken pavement as if but just disturbed. When we go now to the chapel of St. Peter, and see the gaudy and vulgar tiles and a royal or noble name neatly worked into an encaustic border, we experience no emotion whatever, unless it be one of anger. But in Shakespeare's lifetime London was very much as it had been left by the wars of York and Lancaster. He could see the roses growing in the Temple Gardens, with the gabled buildings round them, which successive treasurers have since been so busy removing. He could traverse Cheap on the pathways overhung by the rapidly multiplying houses of Cheapside. He could walk in the long nave of "Powles" and listen to the distant music of the reinstated organist.* He must have known many people who had seen heretics burnt in Smithfield.† He may have been present when the heads of dukes and lords fell on the scaffold at Tower Hill. Therefore, to take up the thread of the narrative of the city history from the death of Henry VI., we proceed to describe the final tragedy of the old royal line, the fall of the Church which had so completely overshadowed the city, the acclamations which greeted the young Elizabeth, and when Elizabeth had become an "occidental star," the rising of the clouded days of the Stuarts. We are here chiefly concerned with the scenes which were constantly nearest his own

* 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' pp. 75, 80.

† Evelyn saw a woman burnt there for murder.—'Diary,' 10th May, 1652.

mind as he turned over the pages of the black-letter chronicle of Holinshed—then among the newer books of the day.* Much that Shakespeare noticed is chiefly interesting now because he noticed it.

The popularity which Edward IV. had obtained in the city remained with him until his death. The extension of trade, in which the king himself took part, brought great wealth to London. I have spoken of the English colony at Bruges, which owed its establishment to the Yorkist alliance with Burgundy. The military ability of Edward was equalled by his commercial enterprise. His cruelty on the battlefield was well balanced by his love of luxury. He wrought sad havoc, unless he is much belied by his contemporaries, in the hearts of the citizens' wives; but as his policy filled their coffers much was forgiven him. When William Harcourt was mayor in 1482, the king made a great entertainment in Waltham Forest to the members of the corporation. After many deer had been hunted and killed, the citizens were feasted in a stately arbour erected for the purpose. The same year Edward sent, as a present to the mayoress and the wives of the principal citizens, two harts, six bucks, and a tun of wine. When he died, in April, 1483, there was great lamentation in London; and though, shortly afterwards, his favourite, Jane Shore, was made to do penance before the people, it is recorded that "more pitied her penance than rejoiced therein." †

Sir Edmund Shaw ‡ was mayor when Edward died; and Richard, seeing that the best chance of success in

* Holinshed's 'Chronicle,' from which Shakespeare derived his historical knowledge, was printed in 1577. This, the first edition, is often described as Shakespeare's Holinshed. See Lowndes, p. 1086.

† Stow's 'Annals.'

‡ Or Shaa.

his schemes lay in obtaining the favour of the city, had him sworn of the privy council; and engaged his brother, Dr. Shaw, a famous preacher, to "break the matter in a sermon" at St. Paul's Cross. In this discourse Shaw hesitated at nothing. He not only accused the late king of bigamy, but the duchess of York, his mother—"proud Cis" herself—of adultery; and proceeded to describe the duke of Gloucester as the perfect image of his illustrious father. At this point in Shaw's peroration Gloucester had arranged to appear in the background, perhaps coming up through Dean's Yard from Baynard's Castle, perhaps along Cheapside from Crosby Place,* which he then rented. But by some mistake, Shaw had finished the passage before the duke appeared, and he ruined its effect by a repetition. The people had been expected to cheer the duke, but they maintained an obstinate silence. Next day an assembly, consisting of the mayor, aldermen, and principal citizens, was called in the Guildhall. Buckingham made them a speech, recapitulating a few cases of oppression and heavy taxation under the late reign, and referring to Shaw's sermon as if he had proved the truth of his various allegations regarding Edward and his mother. He next dwelt upon the dangers to the realm of having a boy-king, and ended by calling upon the citizens to offer the crown to Richard. Again there was obstinate silence; and Buckingham had to try a second speech. Even then no response was heard. The recorder, Fitzwilliam, at the mayor's command, also spoke in the same sense, but without avail. Buckingham then in-

* Shakespeare makes Richard tenant of Crosby Place as early as 1471 ('Richard III.,' act i. scene 2), but this is an anachronism. He also mentions it in act i. scene 3, and in act iii. scene 1. Richard certainly lived there at the time of the young king's death.

formed the citizens that the "lords and commons" would have determined the matter without them, but wished to have the city with them; and would expect an answer one way or other on the morrow.

The prescriptive right of London to elect the king was thus partially allowed. The great importance which Richard's party attached to an election by the citizens is a very interesting feature in the story; and when we remember that Edward IV. had been similarly chosen, we can the better understand Buckingham's anxiety. At last some of the protector's servants, and some of the duke's, raised a shout at the further end of the hall, calling for king Richard, and throwing their caps into the air. This was enough, as no formal opposition was offered. Buckingham assumed the unanimity of the assembly, and invited them to accompany him on the morrow to lay the crown at Richard's feet.

The mayor, accordingly, with the chief citizens, put on their best apparel, and repaired to Baynard's Castle, where the protector was lodging in the house of the mother whom he had allowed to be so basely defamed.* He probably thought that if things took an unfavourable turn it would be well to be near the water's edge, instead of at Crosby Place, where he might have been more easily hemmed in. He affected great reluctance, obliging the citizens to send twice before he would admit them, and giving Buckingham the opportunity of pointing out that he did not expect them. But once he had accepted the offer, he did not long delay, and made his way immediately to Westminster, going thither, no doubt, by water, and took his seat on the throne.

The mention of Crosby Place in this narrative may justify a brief digression. Baynard's Castle has wholly

* It is sometimes said that the deputation of citizens attended at Crosby Place.

disappeared, though Shakespeare was probably as familiar with the one as the other. Of Crosby very considerable remains still exist, though the house has passed through some strange vicissitudes, and experienced some very narrow escapes. Of the adjoining priory only the "nuns' aisle" in the parish church of St. Helen, with its window looking towards the altar from the crypt,* now remains. When Shakespeare was an inhabitant of the parish,† he saw it as it was left at the suppression, only that here and there the lead was torn from the roof, here and there a wall was battered down, and the pleasant gardens, of which three at least had belonged to the nuns, were untrimmed and neglected. Great St. Helen's must have presented a singularly picturesque appearance to him as he entered from the street of Bishopsgate. On his left were the priory buildings, low, straggling, and irregular, with trees rising in many places above the roofs. On his right was Crosby Place, with its long row of gothic windows looking on the churchyard, and its lofty hall towering behind. In the midst was the church, overshadowed and "half hidden by the foliage."‡

The church of St. Helen stood here before the priory was founded, for between 1145 and 1150§ it was given to St. Paul's by one Ranulf, and Robert, his son. It is the only church of St. Helen in London, and seems to have been connected in some way with York, since Ranulf stipulated for the keeping in it of the anniversary

* So Malcolm describes it ('*Londinum Redivivum*,' iii. 554), and he had seen a considerable portion of the Priory standing; but from his print it would seem that the cloister was at a lower level than the church, and that this "squint" was in the cloister wall.

† He is assessed in the parish books in October, 1598, for 5*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*

‡ Malcolm.

§ The date is not given, but the names of the witnesses, chiefly prebendaries, enable it to be fixed within five years. Newcourt, i. 363.

of the great archbishop Thurstan, who had died in 1140.* Half a century later† the priory was founded by William Fitzwilliam, a goldsmith, who obtained the advowson of the church, and gave it to the prioress. The nuns seem to have stood in the same relation to the dean and chapter of St. Paul's as the nuns of Kilburn to St. Peter's, Westminster; and one of the deans, Robert Kentwood, knowing, or suspecting, that things were not always conducted as they should be by the ladies of St. Helen's, issued a series of regulations, from which it is evident that he had cause for displeasure.‡ He enjoins morning and evening service, and silence in chapel. He forbids the admission of any but nuns to the dormitory. He expresses anxiety as to the character of the portress: she should be "some sad woman and discreet." The presence of lodgers in the house is discouraged. That it was necessary to make these provisions for the good behaviour of the nuns is very evident from several parts of the document. One sentence is especially curious as giving us a somewhat novel idea of female monastic life in the fifteenth century: "Also we enjoin you that all dancing and revelling be utterly forborn among you, except Christmas and other honest times of recreation among yourselves, used in absence of seculars in all wise." This injunction has no meaning if it does not tell us that the prioress and her nuns were in the habit occasionally of giving balls, and of admitting the laity to them. §

* For St. Helen, the "Empress Helena," see chap. ii. "Roman London."

† Newcourt thinks 1212 is the exact date.

‡ They are printed in full by Hugo, 'Last Ten Years of the Priory of St. Helen,' and by Malcolm.

§ Mr. Hugo's materials were chiefly the same as Malcolm's, but his long paper already quoted, which was originally contributed to the 'Transac-

The ground south of the church was leased for 99 years by the prioress, Alice Ashfeld, to Sir John Crosby in 1466. He must have hurried on his building operations considerably if they were completed in his lifetime, as he only survived nine years, if so long, for his will was proved in February, 1475. His rent amounted to 11*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, and though he had no freehold, he seems to have been certain of a long tenure. The house must have been one of the most magnificent in London. Even yet, the hall, now a public dining-room, is a marvel of beauty. The carved oak roof rivals that of Eltham, while the building is in far better repair. The tall oriel illuminates the luncheons of bank clerks, and shines on any one, however humble, who can afford to sit near it; but it must have given light in its time to assemblies beside which even the famous coteries of Holland House are as nothing. Here "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," must have entertained Ben Jonson, and may have entertained Shakespeare. Fifty years before Crosby had belonged to Sir Thomas More. Colet and all the great men who gathered round the witty chancellor, must therefore have been here, but not Erasmus, who had left England.* More's last letter, written from the Tower with a coal, the night before his death, was addressed to his friend Bonvisi, who had succeeded him

tions' of the London and Middlesex Society, adds a little to our knowledge of the history of the Priory. The nuns are said by Stow to have been popularly called Minchons, whence Minchon, or Mincing Lane, which belonged to the Priory. The last prioress, Mary Rowlesley, had evidently provided for her kindred. In 1534 she granted the manor of Burston, now called Bordeston, or Boston, to John Rowlesley, at 9*l.* a year, and he and Edward Rowlesley continued to receive pensions till 1556.

* Erasmus left England in 1514. Colet died in 1519. More had Crosby Place between 1516 and 1523, but the More household described by Erasmus was in Bucklersbury. See Boehm, 'Oxford Reformers.'

in Crosby Place. It is but too easy to multiply names, and the few I have mentioned must suffice. St. Helen's Church has been called, not without reason,* the Westminster Abbey of the city, and we may go further and say, in the same proportion, Crosby Place is its Westminster Hall. It is the central feature in Shakespeare's London.

Six days after Bosworth, Henry of Richmond entered the city in triumph. This was in August, and he was received by the mayor, Thomas Hill, and the sheriffs and aldermen, with great pomp, and conveyed to St. Paul's, where he offered the standards he had captured, and took up his abode in the palace of the bishop close by. His coronation followed at Westminster at the end of October, but meanwhile a terrible calamity had befallen the city. "This year," says the chronicler,† "was a great death and hasty, called sweating sickness." The mayor died and was succeeded by William Stocker. Six aldermen shared Hill's fate, and Stocker had only enjoyed his new dignity for three days when he followed his predecessor to the tomb. A third mayor was chosen in John Ward, who, whether he was a candidate at Michaelmas or had died in the meantime, only held the mayoralty till the annual election, and was succeeded by Hugh Brice, an Irishman. Thus London, in the short space of a single month, saw four different mayors at the Guildhall.‡

The reign of Henry VII. commenced with an incident very noteworthy in the city annals. The new king invented a national debt. He borrowed 3000 marks, and

* By the late Dean Stanley.

† 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' p. 24.

‡ Further references to this and other visitations of pestilence will be found in a subsequent chapter.

probably to the surprise of the lenders, he repaid it at the appointed time. This judicious conduct enabled him a few years later, in 1488, to obtain 6000*l.* without any trouble, and it would have been better for his popularity if he had continued to borrow and had occasionally paid. But in 1491 he extorted a so-called benevolence, and saying that he who paid most should be esteemed his best friend, he made all his enemies. The conduct of Empson and Dudley, his extortionate agents, is well known. It was signalised in London by the fine of 2700*l.*, which they imposed on Sir William Capel, an alderman, for some imaginary infringement of a forgotten law, but which, by the intercession of powerful friends, was eventually reduced a half, though not till he had been committed to the custody of the sheriff. He was marked down for future spoliation : and the king, though on one occasion, in a sudden fit of liberality, he released all the debtors in London who owed forty shillings and under, permitted the prosecution of Thomas Kneesworth for some abuse when he had been mayor two years before, and sent Shaw and Groves, who had been his sheriffs, to the Marshalsea. Heavy fines only obtained their release. When Christopher Haws, an alderman, was apprehended on some imaginary charge, "being a timorous man," it killed him : and in 1506, when the king went so far as to depose one of the sheriffs, Johnson by name, and to put William Fitzwilliam * in his place, "the other," we read,† "took such a thought that he died." Capel was made of stouter stuff, and when a year later Empson and Dudley prose-

* This William Fitzwilliam built the church of St. Andrew Under-shaft as we now see it. He had been recorder in the year of Richard's accession, as mentioned above.

† 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' p. 29.

cuted him for having allowed the escape of some coiners at the time of his mayoralty, he absolutely refused to pay the fine of 2000*l.* imposed on him, and went cheerfully to prison, first to the Compter,* and afterwards to the Tower, where he remained till Henry's death in 1509.

Much more serious crimes than any Haws or Capel had committed were condoned for a money payment. The rebels under Lord Audley threatened London from Blackheath in 1498, and when the citizens had armed themselves and had repaired their fortifications, the king led them against the rebels, who were signally defeated. A few, including the leaders, were put to death: but the rest compounded for their lives at the rate of two or three shillings each. Even Perkin Warbeck was not hanged till he had made two attempts to escape from the Tower. In this respect Henry's reign is in strong contrast to the reigns of the succeeding monarchs of his family. But he was not on that account the more popular with the citizens, on whom he forced a new charter, at the price of 5000 marks, to be paid by instalments, which merely recapitulated some of the privileges already granted by former kings.

The young king, Henry VIII., when he succeeded his father in 1509, was not yet the husband of the princess Katharine, but on the occasion of their marriage, a procession passed from the Tower to Westminster, which must have shown the citizens, in its lavish display, how different was their new king from his father. The western end of Cheapside, which was known as Goldsmiths' Row, from the number of shops belonging to that craft, was hung with gold brocade: and the civic dignitaries took a prominent part in the day's pomp.

* Or sheriffs' prison.

Henry was immensely popular, and contrived to retain his popularity in the city to the end of his long reign. While he was still young he came freely among the citizens: he saw the watch march through the streets in state on St. John's eve, and joined the May games on Shooter's Hill. But one of his very first acts had been to fling Empson and Dudley into the Tower, and when, in the course of the following year, they were both attainted by parliament, they were immediately handed over to the headsman, and their agents in extortion were about the same time marched in mock procession through the city, riding backwards, to the pillory.

The inclination to severity and the disregard of human life which marked Henry's later years had not yet been displayed. On the contrary, he seemed to delight in the exercise of the royal prerogative of pardon. On "Evil May Day," as it was called, a foolish demonstration against foreign merchants was turned by an injudicious alderman into a riot. The apprentices had been excited by a sermon preached by a certain Dr. Bell, and the same day alderman John Mundy, finding some young men playing at single-stick in Cheap ordered one of them into custody. A rescue was attempted. The Compter was broken open, the foreign houses were plundered, many people on both sides were hurt, and finally Newgate prison was assailed and some rioters who had been arrested and shut up were set at liberty. To add to the confusion, the lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Roger Chomeley, fired off his guns, and by daylight next morning all the suburbs were pouring soldiers into the city. The lord prior of Clerkenwell came with his knights. The duke of Norfolk summoned his guardsmen. The Inns of Court sent their volunteer students. In short, such a riot has seldom been stirred up in a

single night, or so much alarm awakened with so little known cause. Dr. Bell was sent to the Tower, where his punning device may still be seen carved—"A Bell"—on the wall of a dungeon.* A special commission sat at the Guildhall to try the rioters. An immense number were condemned, and gallows were set up at the principal gates and in other places. Thirteen only were hanged, and the rest, to the number of 400, including 11 women, were brought with ropes about their necks to Westminster, where they were formally pardoned by the king, cardinal Wolsey exhorting them to loyalty and obedience.

It is not easy to understand the political significance of this event. Evil May Day is referred to long afterwards in many city documents. Ostensibly the demonstration was against French workmen and merchants, and especially against one Mewtas or Mottas, of whom the Grey Friars' chronicler says that he "was an outlandish man" whom they would have slain had he not "hid him in the gutters in his house." Ten years later, Seymour, who had been sheriff during the riot, was a candidate for the mayoralty, but was objected to by the commons on account of his share in the severities which followed, and was only elected after violent opposition.†

In these early years of Henry's reign the city was agitated by another event. The unpopularity of the clergy was becoming greater every year, though no stop

* By one of the most senseless of all the vandalisms to which the Tower has been subjected in our own day, the prisoners' inscriptions in the Beauchamp Tower have all been assembled in one chamber, thus not only destroying their historical value, but that also of the carvings which were already on the walls.

† 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' p. 33.

was put to the increase of chantries and other ecclesiastical foundations. An innumerable multitude of clergy, secular and regular, of mass priests, monks, friars, singers, and preachers, pervaded the city. The nunneries were crowded. Twenty-seven minoresses died of a plague in one year at Aldgate.* The difficulty of keeping order must have been greatly increased by the comparative immunity of religious people. Colet, the friend of More, of Erasmus, of Warham, of all who were good and learned, in short, and himself a clergyman and dean of St. Paul's, in a sermon before convocation spoke openly of the morals of the priests.† The occasion was a serious one. The bishop, Fitz James, was known to have shown no mercy in his dealings with Lollards. Yet Colet permitted daily readings in his church, and had been heard to pin his faith to the Bible and to the Apostle's Creed.‡ He catechised the young in English, and it was notorious that many who were suspected of heresy came to hear him. As the convocation met in his cathedral he could not well refuse to preach to them. Yet he hesitated. If he spoke, he knew he must speak the truth. At last his mind was made up and he determined to do his duty, cost what it might. He boldly reproved his hearers for their mode of life, their hunting of preferment, their avarice, their pride, their lust, and exhorted them to newness of mind. This sermon struck the first note of the English Reformation. The bishop would have prosecuted Colet, but archbishop Warham ignored the charges. Henry himself, though he heard

* "This year, 1514, was great death at the Minories." 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' p. 29.

† See Milman, 'St. Paul's,' and Green, ii. 88.

‡ For further particulars as to Colet's views, see Seebohm's 'Oxford Reformers.'

from him unpalatable truths, did not hesitate to declare "This is the doctor for me."

In the city the bishop made little way towards gaining the confidence or affection of the people. The burnings in Smithfield were frequent. It was dangerous to bring a priest to justice even for the worst offences. Richard Hunne, a respectable citizen who had been concerned in a prosecution against a priest, was accused of heresy, shut up in the Lollards' Tower adjoining the cathedral, and there, after a short interval, was found dead. A coroner's jury refused to bring in a verdict of suicide, but accused the keepers of the prison of wilful murder. The chancellor, Dr. Horsey, notwithstanding his indignant denial, was suspected of having helped to kill Hunne, and of having hung up the body so as to raise the suspicion of suicide. The bishop, by way of screening Horsey, made matters worse. A Wycliffite bible had been found in Hunne's house. His body was dug up, condemned by a mock court at which the bishop presided, and actually burnt in Smithfield.

The long-continued troubles of the Wars of the Roses, and the subsequent extortions of Henry VII. had diverted public attention from the ecclesiastical question, but it now daily became more and more prominent. The clergy had laid up in men's minds a store of bitter memories from which they could not in after years escape. Quite apart from religious feeling every citizen had his own grievance; there was no family but had suffered more or less from the extortions, cupidity, immorality, or accusations of a priest: and nowhere in England were the later measures of Henry more popular than in London, nowhere did the hatred of "superstition" become so intense, nowhere, unfortunately, did the enthusiasm now being awakened lead to more com-

plete and contemptuous destruction of "massing stuff," of noble buildings, of gorgeous monuments,

" Of tombs
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights,"

the fathers of the city.

Under the year 1528, we have a curious illustration of the position of the religious houses in these last days of their existence. The chronicler,* from whom I have so frequently quoted, tells us of the escape of a prisoner from Newgate into the adjoining priory. He continued seven days in the church, when the sheriff and his officers obtained leave to speak with him. In spite of all exhortation, he refused either to abjure the realm, or to give himself up; and at length, exasperated by his obstinacy, the sheriff seized him, and took him forcibly away. This breach of sanctuary caused the friars to shut the church from Monday till Thursday, and "mass was sayd and songe in the fratter." At length the bishop of St. Asaph, who lived in the house, reconsecrated the church; but the "powre prisoner continewyd in prisone, for they sowte all the wayes that they cowde, but the lawe wolde not serve them to honge him; and at the last was delyvered and put at lyberte."

The next entry is of a different character, but interesting as illustrating the history of the theatre. It relates to an actor. His name was John Scotte. He was one of "the kynges playeres," and was put into Newgate for "rebukynge of the shreffes." Perhaps he presumed on his position in the royal service; but he lay for a "sennet" (seven-night) in gaol, and was then led through the city and back again; and, finally, was

* 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' p. 34.

“delyveryd home to hys howse,” but—and this gives us some idea of what a prison must have been in those days—“he took such a thought that he died, for he went in his shirt.”

The beginning of the end was now at hand for the monasteries. The same year that the poor player was done to death, a solemn farce was being enacted at the house of the Black Friars. The two legates, cardinal Campeggio, and his brother cardinal, Wolsey, sat on the divorce question; and in the autumn Wolsey ceased to be chancellor. Shakespeare must often have visited the beautiful hall of the Dominicans, in which he lays the scene.* To the privileges accorded to the monastic orders, and the odour of sanctity which hung about places which had once been theirs, we may attribute the very existence of the theatre in Blackfriars which Richard Burbage built in 1575, and in which Shakespeare was a shareholder. Players had been expelled from the city, on account of the fear of infection in large crowds; but the sheriff could not touch them within the sacred precincts. And the ancient house of the Black Friars, by its protection, repaid the poet for the immortality he has conferred upon it.† Another scene which occurred here might well have been dramatised. In 1524, a parliament had sat in the great hall. The names of the city representatives have not been preserved, but we cannot doubt that Sir Thomas More was one of them. He was certainly a member, and was elected speaker. The king had demanded a heavy subsidy, and Wolsey came into the hall to advocate it.‡ He was

* ‘King Henry VIII.,’ act ii. scene 4.

† The Playhouse, still commemorated in Playhouse Yard, where the *Times* office stands now, was pulled down in 1655.

‡ Roper’s ‘Life of More,’ p. 18.

attended by his whole retinue, his mace-bearers, his cross, his scarlet hat, the great seal of England, and all the state which belonged at once to an archbishop, a cardinal, and a chancellor. The scene that ensued puts the reader in mind of the visit of Charles I. to the House of Commons, in 1642. More and the members, repeatedly addressed by the overbearing Wolsey, took no notice of him whatever. They sat silent in their places. At length the cardinal began to perceive the mistake he had made. He said he had been sent by the king, who would require an answer. The silence was surprising and obstinate. "Is it," he asked, "that the house will only express its mind through the speaker?" On this More made answer, assuring the cardinal that the members were abashed at the sight of so great a personage. This little bit of flattery shows the admirable tact of the speaker, who went on to say that the chancellor's presence was not in accordance with the ancient liberties of the house; and that he himself could give no reply to the demand except as instructed by it. Wolsey was obliged to retire discomfited, and afterwards, in the gallery at Whitehall, said to More, "Would to God you had been at Rome, Master More, when I made you speaker."

The divorce took place in 1533, but already the city monasteries had begun to feel the heavy hand of Henry. On the 11th May, 1531,* the work that was to transform London began by the suppression of the Augustinian canons of Elsing Hospital,† a blind asylum. A few months later the venerable priory of Aldgate‡ was dissolved; the canons dispersed to other houses, and

* 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' p. 35.

† Afterwards Sion College.

‡ For an account of the foundation see above, chapter vi.

the site given to lord chancellor Audley.* When queen Anne Boleyn was crowned,† she passed through the city in procession on her way to Westminster, having two days before gone by water from Greenwich to the Tower “with barges, the mayer, aldermen, and the craffttes, as the mayerdothe to Westminster whan he takys hys othe.” Burnings and persecutions now went on with renewed vigour. The foolish proceedings of Elizabeth Barton, a Kentish prophetess, involved many of the clergy in destruction. In May, 1534, “the Holy Maid,” as she was called, was drawn to Tyburn, with two monks from the cathedral at Canterbury, two friars, and a London rector, and all were hanged and beheaded. The bodies of the monks ‡ were buried in the Black Friars’ church, those of the friars and the prophetess at the Grey Friars’; and the parson in his own church. This was but the beginning of executions. Three Carthusian priors, including the head of the London “Charter House,” and six monks were hanged at Tyburn, and quartered. One of the quarters of the prior was set up at the entrance of his own house facing into Aldersgate Street. The same year Fisher and More were beheaded on Tower Hill; and so what Mr. Green has well called the English Terror was inaugurated. The pages of the Chronicle are taken up with long lists of abbots, priors, priests, monks, friars, noblemen, knights, and ladies, who pass in sad procession to the gallows, the block, or the stake. In 1537 ten women and three men were hanged at Tyburn in one day. The rebels of the Pilgrimage of Grace were tried and condemned at the Guildhall; and after their

* He had also the site of the Charterhouse.

† On Whitsunday, May 31, 1532.

‡ The monks were Bocking and Dering; the friars, Rich and Risby; the priest, Gold. He was rector of St. Mary Aldermary.

execution their quarters were buried at the Charterhouse. A single paragraph from the journal of the Franciscan friar* will be a sufficient example of the horrors which went on in London during the rule of Cromwell. It tells us first of the execution at Tyburn of six men, including the abbot of Fountains and the prior of the Black Friars in York; and goes on, "At that time was drawn from the Tower after, the lady Margaret Bowmer (Bulmer), wife unto Sir John Bowmer, and he made her his wife; but she was the wife of one Cheyny, for he sold her unto Sir Bowmer; and she was drawn when she came to Newgate into Smithfield, and there burned the same forenoon."

The assumption by the king of what had hitherto been considered the rights of the pope, in 1534, placed the monasteries at his mercy. The early zeal of the monks and friars had passed away. The apostles of the New Learning wanted to spread education, and beheld the magnificent buildings and vast estates of the so-called religious houses with envious eyes. Cromwell and the king had an old grudge against them for resisting a "benevolence." Nor did any one rise to defend them. The whole system which it had taken so many centuries to build up, and which had grown so vast that it overshadowed the land, fell at a blow. In London, without mentioning the suburbs, the suppression left vacant great spaces of the most valuable land at what we still call Whitefriars, at Blackfriars, at Newgate Street, at Smithfield, at the Charterhouse, at St. Martin's-le-Grand, in Cheap, at the Austin Friars, at the Crutched Friars, in the Minories, at Aldgate, at Bishopsgate, at St. Helen's; and, in short, on more than a dozen sites, great

* The 'Grey Friars' Chronicle,' p. 40.

or small ; some of them within, some without the walls. It is worth notice that only one abbey was in the city.* All were priories except the house of the nuns of St. Clare, whose abbess, as the Minoresses were a Franciscan order, would more correctly be described as a prioress. But many houses with mitred abbots and lady abbesses at their head held land in London ; and the fall of Westminster, of Barking, of Bermondsey, of Battle, and many others, some of them much further away than these, which had owned estates in the city, contributed to the surprising change. In 1538 the work was completed, and the division of spoils began.

There were among the convents a few in which sick people had always been received. The hospitals were not all of this character, but a majority of them certainly seem to have performed their duty to the poor, and their suppression with the rest left their patients uncared for. The city authorities, though they probably saw the ruin of so many fine buildings and so many splendid churches, with utter indifference, were alive to the charge which the absence of endowments for the succour of the poor and suffering threw upon them. A period of great misery must have followed the suppression. No provision of any kind seems to have been made beforehand for carrying on the good work hitherto performed at Smithfield, in St. Bartholomew's, or at Bishopsgate, in Bethlehem. The blind at Elsyng's Spittle, the lame at St. Giles's, the leprous at St. Thomas's, were thrown upon the world. The evil was so great that, immediately on the suppression, the mayor, aldermen and commonalty

* The "New Abbey" of St. Mary of Grace, in East Smithfield, sometimes called East Minster, was without the walls. It belonged to the Cistercian order. The victualling office, so often mentioned by Pepys, afterwards stood on the site.

addressed a petition to the king praying him to grant them four houses, which they named, for the relief of poor, sick, and needy persons. In the general confusion, the petition lay neglected for eight years. It is probable however, that though no formal step was taken, the citizens were allowed to use the hospitals, or some of them. They asked for "Saynt Mary Spytell, Saynt Bartylmewes Spytell, and Saynt Thomas Spytell, and one abbey called the Newe Abbey at Tower hyll, fownded of good devocion, by auncient fathers, and endowed with great possessions and rents, onely for the relyeff, comfote, and ayde of the poore and indygent people not beyng hable to helpe theymselffs."* In 1544 the citizens succeeded in obtaining St. Bartholomew's. Two years later they agreed to pay 500 marks a year to meet a similar contribution from the king towards the expense of providing for the poor. In the same year, 1546, they obtained the Grey Friars', and a scheme for the management of an extensive charity was formed by which the church, under the name of Christ Church, was to be made parochial; the neighbouring parishes of St. Nicholas Shambles and St. Ewen were to be united, and two clergymen, one a vicar, and the other to be called the Visitor of Newgate, were to be appointed. Early in the following year the king made a further concession, and the city obtained possession of Bedlam. The first years of the reign of Edward VI. were taken up in arranging and regulating the hospitals, and in dealing with their endowments, committees being formed of aldermen and common councillors, to survey and govern the charities to the best advantage. In 1552, Sir Richard Dobbes,

* 'Memoranda, References and Documents relating to the Royal Hospitals,' printed under the direction of the committee of the Court of Common Council, 1836.

then mayor, called all the citizens together into their respective parish churches, "where, by the lord mayor, the aldermen and other grave citizens, they were by eloquent orations persuaded how great and how many commodities would ensue unto them and their city, if the poor of divers sorts, which they named, were taken from out their streets, lanes, and alleys, and were bestowed and provided for in hospitals." The result of this appeal was so satisfactory, that in the course of the same year the Grey Friars' convent was fitted up as a school, the hospital of St. Bartholomew newly furnished, and the hospital of St. Thomas, now called "St. Thomas the Apostle," in Southwark, purchased from the crown and repaired for the reception of "poor, impotent, lame, and diseased people." In the following year, a further grant was obtained of the palace of Bridewell, as a workhouse, the endowments given by Henry VII. to the Savoy being transferred to it, and on the 26th June, 1553, Edward VI. signed the letters patent, formulating the whole system of municipal charity.

Except Bridewell, all these foundations still subsist. The conception of the public duty towards pauperism has altered since Edward VI. gave his father's palace to the citizens for a workhouse. "Bridewell" has become the ordinary name throughout the country for a temporary prison, and its origin is hardly remembered, the more so, as every vestige of the ancient house has disappeared. Some of the kings had a residence here as early as the reign of Henry III., if not of John. The spot can hardly have been dry land much before the beginning of the thirteenth century. We have, however, very few particulars of its history, and can but fall back upon the theory that it, like the neighbouring Savoy, was foreshore, and so became royal property. Henry VIII.

seems to have liked the position, and to have rebuilt the house. He and Katharine were living here when the two cardinals sat on the divorce in the Black Friars' house at the opposite side of the Fleet ; and when the Emperor Charles V. was in England he lodged with the friars, and a temporary bridge was made for his suite to pass into their apartments in Bridewell. The city authorities applied the palace to various uses, but it was chiefly what we should now call a "casual ward." * It was not pulled down till 1863. In old views and maps, it appears as a castellated building of some architectural pretensions.† It was the scene of the third act of Shakespeare's 'Henry VIII.,' who, playing at the Black Friars', had Bridewell almost before his eyes.

The estates in the city, confiscated at the suppression, speedily became the prey of greedy courtiers. Cromwell himself condescended to fix upon London for the site of a residence. Some small tenements in Throgmorton Street, belonging to, and adjoining the house of the Austin Friars, were pulled down, and a "very large and spacious" mansion was erected for the vicar-general. Stow, whose father suffered from Cromwell's tyranny, feelingly describes the way in which the great man‡ encroached on the land of his neighbours, and by the simple process of removing their fences, or the more complicated device of pushing back their summer-houses on rollers, succeeded in piecing together the open space still marked on maps as the Drapers' Garden. It was bought by the company in 1541. Henry VIII. played at

* See view of court in Wilkinson, vol. i., and of the wretched "Pass room," in Ackerman's 'Microcosm,' vol. i.

† Wilkinson calls it a "western *arx palatina*."

‡ "Thus much of mine own knowledge have I thought good to note, that the sudden rising of some men causeth them in some matters to forget themselves" (p. 68).

dice with Sir Miles Partridge for the bells and belfry at the eastern end of St. Paul's Churchyard, and lost them. How he had become possessed of them is not very clear, unless they were reckoned among the useless ornaments of the church, but the tower was pulled down, and the bells melted. This was the tower beside which the citizens had of old so often assembled in their folk-mote, summoned by the great bell.* The site of the Charterhouse was first granted to lord chancellor Audley, who as we have seen had also Holy Trinity, at Aldgate, and by him sold to lord North, who again parted with it to Dudley, duke of Northumberland. St. Helen's Priory was granted to Williams, Cromwell's brother-in-law, who, though not in any sense his heir,† assumed the name, and became ancestor of Oliver Cromwell, the Protector. The site of the priory of the Crutched Friars, at the south-east corner of Hart Street, was granted to Sir Thomas Wyatt. The school and church of St. Thomas of Acon, in Cheapside, were bought for 969*l.*, by Sir Richard Gresham and the mercers' company, in 1541, and the good work inaugurated by Neel in the fifteenth century was carried on almost without a break.‡

* The place of meeting of the Folk-mote is defined for us by a presentment against the dean and chapter in the fourteenth year of Edward II., as to the obstruction and enclosure of "*quandam placeam terræ de solo Domini Regis,*" 30 feet long by 20 feet wide in one part, in other 15 by 8. The citizens contended that the ground on the east, including a new cemetery, and the cemetery by the bell-tower, as well as the ground on the west side, belonged to the king, and that the ground between the Cheap Gate and St. Augustine's, was king's highway. Sir Miles, "*the wych playd wyth Kynge Henry the viiith at dysse, for the gret belfery,*" was hanged on 26th February, 1552, on Tower Hill.

† Thomas Cromwell's son and heir was summoned to parliament as lord Cromwell in the very month of his father's death. His descendants became, in 1607, earls of Ardglass, and on their extinction in the male line, in 1687, the representation of the great vicar-general devolved on an ancestor of the present lord de Clifford.

‡ See above, p. 114.

The alteration made in the aspect of the city by means of these changes must have been remarkable, and the social changes must have been scarcely less enormous. The monasteries had long ceased to inspire any popular enthusiasm. The people feared the mass-priests, and hated them. The friars inspired only contempt. The Grey Friars' chronicler, whose quaint pages I have so frequently quoted, was perhaps afraid to record his indignation at the destruction of so many sacred places, and so many objects of reverence, though he does not fail to show his pleasure when the reign of Mary brings some of them back. But his tone throughout the reign of Edward VI. is uniformly marked by gloom. He notes the ruin of ancient houses, the desecration of churches, and the non-observance of holy-days, but restrains himself to the occasional ejaculation, "Almyghty God helpe it when hys wyllle ys," or, if a more than usually fierce Protestant preaches at St. Paul's, cries, "What an ironys oppynyone is this!" He makes frequent mention of the successive steps by which London was transformed during this period. In 1545, we read that the church of the White Friars was pulled down and the steeple of the Black Friars. "Item, thys same yere in the same monyth (September) was the Charterhowse pulde downe." He notices in the last month of Henry's reign, two events, the death of the earl of Surrey, amid "grete lamentacion," and the reopening of the church of the Grey Friars, "and it was namyd Crystys Church of the fundacion of Kynge Henry the viijth." Henry was actually on his death-bed, at Whitehall, when Ridley, then bishop of Rochester, celebrated the reopening of "Christ Church," in a sermon the same day at St. Paul's Cross, in which he dwelt on the king's munificence, and recapitulated the advantages of his tardy gift to the city,

The very same year saw the destruction of the choir of the church. The oaken stalls were taken out and sold. The altars were all pulled down, and with them the altartombs and the larger gravestones, and were sold for their value as old materials—Stow says for the paltry sum of 50*l*. A catalogue of about two hundred monuments is still extant.* Two old stones, commemorating only private persons, were found on the site fifty years ago. The other monastic houses fared even worse. We have already seen how the marquis of Winchester treated the Austin Friars.† It, with the priory of St. Bartholomew's, was spared by the Great Fire, and portions of the old buildings of the Minoreesses were extant till the beginning of this century.‡ The choir of St. Bartholomew's still stands, a magnificent example of Norman work, but partially desecrated by the neighbourhood and intrusion of a factory. Some portions of a cloister and other buildings may be made out in the adjoining courts and lanes. Of the Black Friars' Priory nothing is left. Of the White Friars' we have only the name. The Mercers' chapel survived till the Great Fire, when it consisted of a handsome nave and aisles, with a lofty choir, quite overshadowing the little parish church of St. Mary.

It is, perhaps, with secret satisfaction that the chronicler demonstrates the sinfulness of the people of his time, and dwells on the punishments inflicted for various crimes. To a contemporary, Henry Machyn,§ a cheerful under-

* Printed in 'Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica,' vol. v. See also preface to Mr. Nichols' edition of the 'Grey Friars' Chronicle.'

† See above, chapter viii.

‡ They are engraved by Smith, 'Topography,' p. 8.

§ "Monser the Machyn de Henry," as he playfully describes himself (p. 143), kept his diary, which has been printed by the Camden Society, from 1550 to 1563.

taker, we are also indebted for many curious particulars of social life and street scenery. One example is mentioned by both. In April, 1552, on Easter-even, a woman "rod through London" in a cart; she dwelt in Aldersgate Street, and made "aqwavyte"; and was exposed for cruelty to her servant, "of the wyche the damsell ys lyke to dee." The cruelty was depicted above the cart on a banner painted with the figures of a woman with a card in her hand, "such as one doth card wool withal," and of a naked girl, whom she is represented as carding—"the wyche she left butt lytyll skyn of her"—and about her neck was hung the implement of her misdeeds. She was finally set down at her own door, the beadles making a proclamation of her shameful acts. Other misdemeanours were punished with whipping, as some girls who were idle and would not work, some immoral apprentices, and a man for selling false rings. A "pyller" or "post of reformacyon," is many times mentioned, and seems to have given great satisfaction to the authorities. It was set up on the 1st June, 1553, at the Standard in Cheap. One Sunday morning the mayor superintended the flogging "with roddes soore on their backes" of two young servants, who were tied to the pillar with "a chain that they might go about it," and, afterwards "as many as pleased the mayor."

The death of Edward took place at Greenwich, on the 6th July. The short reign of queen Jane was chiefly signalised in the city by the cruel punishment of Gilbert Potter, "a drauer at Sent Jones * at Ludgate," who had spoken slightly of the new queen's title, for which his ears were nailed to the pillory, and afterwards "clean cut off." His master, who had denounced him, was the

* *St. John's Head Tavern*; see Nichols' 'Chronicle of Queen Jane' (Cam. Soc.), p. 115.

same afternoon accidentally drowned in shooting London Bridge on his way to the Tower, where he held the place of a gunner. Queen Mary was no sooner come to the throne, than the Guildhall authorities gave poor Potter a reward, and in the following year he received a grant of land in Norfolk, which, by the way, he speedily sold.*

The Londoners, no doubt, had learned to hate the overbearing duke of Northumberland, and many of them had heard from their fathers of the wars of a disputed succession. Mary's title was accepted with more pleasure than might have been expected by so Protestant a community, but there was probably by this time a strong reaction against the excesses of the reformers, and we cannot doubt, also, that many believed the princess to be by no means so bigoted as her enemies asserted. It turned out well for the Protestants in the result. The queen was far more bigoted than her worst enemy could have described her, and the new party needed but the cruel persecution she so soon commenced to restore them to their former popularity. The new queen, "goodly imparelde," was received at Aldgate by the mayor and aldermen, and conducted in great state to the Tower, the crafts in their livery lining the streets; and as the sympathising chronicler declares, the people's heart rejoicing at her coming in, and giving her "God save Her Grace, and long to continue, and prosper her in goodness! Amen." Mary soon justified the friar's joy. Notwithstanding his declarations, there was a strong party in the city, which, though hating Northumberland and loyal to the queen, was not prepared for

* See the curious "Epistle of Poor Pratte to Gilbert Potter 'in the tyme when he was in prison'" ('Chronicle of Queen Jane,' p. 116). Northumberland is alluded to as "the beare and ragged staf," and is compared to the lions in the den with Daniel. Pratte's knowledge of scripture makes "Nabuchodonosor" the king by whom he was cast in.

the complete restoration of papal supremacy. The very first sermon preached at the Cross by one of the old religion gave offence, though the lord mayor was present. The preacher, Bourne, the queen's chaplain, was ultimately "pullyd owte of the pulpyt by vacabonddes," and a dagger flung in his face. In fact he would probably have perished had not Bradford and Rogers, both of them subsequently martyred, interfered to save him, and he took refuge hard by in St. Paul's School. The Grey Friar notices many such outbreaks, uniformly attributing them to "vagabonds" and the lowest of the people, but it is not unreasonable to suppose many of the same rank as Bradford and Rogers were of the same way of thinking. He records with pleasure the return of Bonner from the Marshalsea, "lyke a byshope," and speaks of the welcome he received, and of the women who pressed to kiss him, and of the joy-bells which the people rang. The altar in St. Paul's was set up again, with such magnificence that the work occupied a month. Mass was performed early in October, the bishop singing "in hys pontyficalibus," and at the beginning of 1554 the old procession, with the mayor and aldermen in their robes, was renewed about the church on Sundays. Controversial disputations were held in "the longe chapell in Powles," three times a week, between "the new sortte and the olde," and there "came moche pepulle; but they ware never the wyser." It is pretty clear that the "new sort" had the best of these arguments, for they were very speedily put down by an order in council. On the occasion of the coronation the daily service had to be suspended because all the priests not under censure for Protestantism, or for having married, were summoned to assist at Westminster. When the queen passed through the city on her way, a man bearing flags stood on the

summit of the cathedral spire, a form of adornment repeated when Philip of Spain made his entry a few months later, and "one came downe from the chapterhowse upon a roppe."

A procession of a different kind conducted lady Jane, with her young husband and two of his brothers, from the Tower to Guildhall, in November, to their trial. With them went the aged Cranmer, and all were tried together.* The old walls can never have witnessed a sadder sight. "They all v. wher cast for to dee," says Henry Machyn. Thomas White, the mayor,† was among the judges, and no one can have envied him the duty. The prisoners pleaded guilty, and confessed the truth of the indictment against them. Sentence was then pronounced, and they were led back as they had come, on foot. The lady Jane was dressed in black cloth, we are told, with a velvet cap, a black velvet book hanging to her girdle, and another book in her hand. She was at this time but "sweet seventeen," and her husband and his brothers were mere boys. It can hardly have been intended that the sentence should be executed; but Wyatt's‡ ill-timed, ill-planned, and ill-conducted rising sealed the fate of two of them.

He appeared before Southwark on the afternoon of

* Mr. Doyne Bell ('St. Peter ad Vincula,' p. 169), says, "The trial was by special commission before the Lord Mayor (Thomas White), the Duke of Norfolk presiding as Lord High Steward, and other peers." The meaning of this sentence escapes me. Was the mayor included in the commission? If so, how can the duke have presided? I cannot conceive the mayor taking a subordinate place in his own Guildhall. The point is interesting, but Mr. Bell, though he seems to have inspected the original documents relating to the trial, does not notice it.

† He was the founder of St. John's College, Oxford, in 1555.

‡ The general history of Wyatt's rebellion does not come within the scope of the narrative in the text. I have only inserted what concerns London.

1st February, and remained at the bridge-foot for a week, during which he suffered the ardour of his followers to cool. Some deserted. Some were taken and hanged—two of them before the western door of St. Paul's. At length he was forced to march westward, as far as Kingston, before he could cross the Thames. If he had possessed ordinary military ability, or had not temporised in Southwark, no one can say what might have happened. As it was, he marched unimpeded to Westminster, past Whitehall, where the queen actually lay at the time, and through Fleet Street to Ludgate. No preparations had yet been made to oppose him. As his men were ascending the hill an officious citizen named Harris, a merchant tailor of Watling Street, exclaimed, "Those be Wyatt's ancients,"* and at his word the gates were shut. It is very possible that a majority of the citizens would at least have let Wyatt in. "Some were very angry," says the chronicler, "with Harres because he spake." In short, though there was not enough discontent abroad among the citizens to induce any one himself to strike the blow, they would not have been sorry to see the blow struck.

Wyatt returned towards Temple Bar, where he was made prisoner; and having been first conducted to Whitehall, was sent finally to the Tower by water. The sequel is soon told. This was 7th February. On the 12th, lady Jane and lord Guildford Dudley were beheaded. On the 14th, twenty of Wyatt's adherents, and of those who had deserted from Norfolk, were hanged in various places. On the 23rd, Suffolk, the lady Jane's father, was beheaded on Tower Hill. Three weeks later the lady Elizabeth, the queen's step-sister, was committed to the Tower. On the 11th March, Wyatt

* A very Shakespearian expression.

himself suffered the penalty of high treason on Tower Hill.*

So ended this miserable business, and the Marian persecution began. Philip II. and Cardinal Pole arrived in the autumn. Numerous timid Protestants recanted; and bonfires were actually ordered throughout London "for joy of the people that were converted." Our chronicler observes that "this year was divers burned in many places in England," and evidently takes as little notice as possible of individual cases. But the last entry in his diary is significant. "The vth. day of September (1556) was browte thorow Cheppesyde teyd in ropes xxiiij tayd to-getheres as herrytykes, and soo unto the Lowlers tower." Rogers, who had intervened to save Dr. Bourne, was the first to suffer in Smithfield; † and Gardiner is said to have refused him permission to bid his wife farewell, on the ground that priests have no wives. This story, even if it is untrue, shows how savagely the persecutions were believed to be carried on. We have no occasion here to detail them. ‡ An inundation, a pestilence in the course of which no fewer than seven aldermen died, and a famine which followed, added to the general gloom. The loss of the last of England's possessions in France was a blow deeply felt by all classes of citizens; and Mary died in November, 1558, leaving behind her a memory of hatred which the lapse of three centuries did not wholly obliterate. Her persecution of the reformers had utterly failed to stamp out the new religion; but had, on the contrary, in London

* It is sometimes said that he was hanged on Hay Hill, which was then in sight of St. James's, but though two of his men were gibbeted there, our chronicler can hardly be wrong in making their leader die on Tower Hill.

† 4th February, 1555.

‡ The whole number burnt is set down at 277.

especially, the effect of rendering it more enduringly popular. Of the purely civic history we know but little. A loan was contracted in the city, in the last year of the queen's reign, on the security of certain lands, and interest at twelve per cent. allowed on it. The mayors seem to have submitted to the ecclesiastical tyranny without a murmur; and were busied with schemes of internal reform, especially regarding the civic expenditure, the old standing quarrel with foreign traders, the regulation of their newly acquired hospitals, and the reduction of Southwark into a "ward without."

This last-named event deserves more than a mere passing mention. The borough, as it is so often called, had been a constant source of trouble to the authorities and, as we have seen, in the reign of Edward IV., some concessions were made by which the London magistrates obtained a certain jurisdiction over it, and were enabled to prevent the escape of criminals across the bridge or the Thames. But it was not until 1550 that the mayor and aldermen obtained the complete control of Southwark. By a royal charter dated on the 23rd April in that year, Edward VI. granted to the commonalty of London the manor of Southwark, and all the manorial rights annexed to it, with a criminal and civil jurisdiction. For this grant* the mayor and citizens paid 647*l.* 2*s.* 1*d.*, and it included a number of houses which had belonged to Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, and had been bought from him by Henry VIII., and the site of the dissolved abbey of Bermondsey. These possessions have ever since, as the Bridge House Estate, paid for the maintenance of London Bridge. The ancient farm rent of 10*l.* yearly was still to be paid, as well as

* See 'The Charters of London,' p. 164, where the text, summarised by Norton, p. 386, is given in full.

a sum of 500 marks for the hospital of St. Thomas, "now called the King's Hospital." The mayor, recorder, and such aldermen as had passed the chair were to be magistrates within the borough, and the whole was to be held of the king "as of his manor of Greenwich, by fealty only, and in free socage by way of service." On receiving this charter, the court of aldermen added another member to their number, and erected Southwark into a ward of the liberties of the city; and at first the choice of an alderman was directed to be by the election of the inhabitants.

In the reign of Philip and Mary a change was made, and the alderman was appointed by the court of aldermen; and the office speedily became a sinecure, which it still remains, the senior alderman for the time being holding it upon translation from his own original ward. A magistrate appointed by the court presides in the district, and a high bailiff executes the duties of a sheriff.

Southwark had probably, in the early days of the Roman occupation, been a place of importance not second even to London. The remains found under the modern streets tell us of a time when the bridge foot was a station to be protected with care. Solid foundations and pavements are frequently uncovered. The boundaries of the fort are still indicated, as in the city, by the occurrence of interments; and the great extent of the cemetery betrays the size of the town.* It does not appear to be anywhere mentioned in a Saxon charter,

* The opinion that Roman London stood on the site of Southwark is a mere question of names. Ptolemy, it is true, places London in Cantium (see above, chapter ii.), and Southwark may have been reckoned an integral part of the city, and may, moreover, before the extension of the walls, have been the larger part.

but its name shows that the walls existed in Saxon times ; and they were certainly available for the protection of the bridge during the Danish invasions. They were, however, easily destroyed by Norman William, and Southwark probably remained a very inconsiderable place for several centuries, though it has sent members to parliament since 1295. Richard the Clerk and William Dynnok were returned in that year ; and Southwark is mentioned as having two members in 1298, 1300, and later years.

The central feature of the borough was and is the church of the priory of St. Mary "Overey," now called St. Saviour's, which has in part survived to our own day among the few conventual churches left in London. The nave was senselessly pulled down and rebuilt in a hideous style in 1839, when many interesting features, including a fine Norman doorway, were obliterated. The site of the adjoining priory seems to have been occupied by some religious foundation connected with the bridge at a very early period, but its authentic history begins with the year 1106, when two knights, one of whom bore the Norman name of Pont-de-l'arche, brought in a colony of Augustinian canons, and made Algod the first prior. Henry I. gave them the parish church of St. Margaret ; and shortly after they obtained the house of Pont-de-l'arche, and other property, much of which is still in the hands of the corporation as the so-called "Bridge House Estate," and is devoted to the maintenance of the fabric of London Bridge. The priory was, however, poor at first, but after the death of St. Thomas, it grew and prospered, being the resort of Canterbury pilgrims, and indeed of all travellers going south. The two parishes of St. Margaret and St. Mary Magdalene were absorbed, and portions of the great building

assigned to the parishioners. At the dissolution the two were legally united into a new parish of St. Saviour, with the priory as a parish church; and it still stands, in part at least, as it stood when, in 1607, the register received the significant entry, "Edmond Shakespeare, a player."

The "restoration" of St. Saviour's took place while Gothic architecture was still very imperfectly understood. The old nave was wholly removed; and the new one is a building which possesses the rare characteristic of absolute ugliness. It is, indeed, disagreeably remarkable to the thousands, perhaps millions, who see it from one branch or another of the network of railways which now surrounds it. The eastern end and the transepts have also been severely handled, but still retain traces of their mediæval beauty, and are crowded with interesting monuments; some of them, such as the altar-tomb of John Gower, the poet, having been brought from the demolished nave. The Lady chapel has been thoroughly remodelled, but retains some ancient features; and, amid the squalor of the neighbourhood, the staring vulgarity of the store-houses which now cover the site of the conventual buildings, and the great heavy mass of the brewery opposite, where once was the park of the bishops of Winchester, it is a veritable oasis. There was another chapel in the angle of the choir and the south transept. It was, strictly speaking, the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene. It shared the fate of the nave, but was not rebuilt. A handsome Perpendicular chapel was east of the Lady chapel, and was also removed. In it had been buried the great Lancelot Andrews, bishop of Winchester. His tomb was taken down, and replaced within the existing building. The palace of the bishops has long disap-

peared, but stood very near the church to the westward, where the names of some of the narrow lanes commemorate it. Clink Street, in particular, points out the site of the prison in which the bishops confined heretics. In the restoration of the Lady chapel care was taken to set up the names of the Protestant martyrs of queen Mary's time who were examined by Gardiner in the adjoining eastern chapel, long used as a consistorial court.*

The connection of William Shakespeare with Southwark is one of the most unquestionable facts in his biography. There was a second inn called the *Boar's Head* in the High Street, immediately opposite the east end of the church.† His brother Edmond was buried in the church in 1607. His theatre was the "Gloabe upon Banckside," to which reference has already been made. Close to it, but rather more to the westward, was the Rose, another theatre. A little further in the same direction were two "pits" for bear-baiting and bull-baiting, and the locality is still, or was very lately, known as the Bear Garden, and is so marked on many maps. Another old name still extant is that of the Falcon Dock, close to which stood the *Falcon Tavern*, which is said to have been patronised by Shakespeare and his company. Paris Garden was exactly on the spot now covered by the southern approaches of Blackfriars Bridge. If the modern visitor, therefore, wishes to identify the place where Shakespeare played, he cannot do better than take the train from Charing Cross to Cannon Street, and when he has crossed the line of

* See Wilkinson's 'Londina Illustrata,' vol. i., from which an idea may be formed as to the ruthlessness of Gwilt's "restoration."

† Boar's Head Court has not long been taken away. It belonged to Fastolf, the original of Falstaff.

the Chatham and Dover Railway he is in the classical region of Bankside. Looking towards the river he will see St. Peter's Church, immediately beyond which, a little to the right, were the bull and bear pits. The train then crosses the Southwark Bridge Road, on the right-hand side of which, looking from the railway, is Barclay and Perkins' brewery. It covers the site not only of the Globe, but also of the Rose, the Hope, and various other places of a similar kind which existed here from before Shakespeare's time until all theatres were abolished by the Commonwealth. The Globe was a great hollow octagon, something like a modern martello tower, but thatched. The thatch took fire in 1613, "by the negligent discharge of a peal of ordnance close to the south side thereof."* 'Henry the Eighth' was actually being played at the time. It was rebuilt on a larger scale, and continued in occupation till 1644, when the ground landlord, Sir Matthew Brand, pulled it down, no doubt at the instance of the authorities.† The other theatres on Bankside and the bear pit were spared a few years longer, but in 1655 the last of them was removed. "Seaven of Mr. Godfrie's Beares, by command of Thomas Pride, then hie sheriefe of Surry, were shot to death, on Saterday, the 9 day of February, 1655, by a company of Souldiers."‡

The long reign of Elizabeth commenced with the customary procession through the city. "Her Grace" was met at Highgate by the lord mayor and aldermen

* Stow. We are not informed how the artillery came to be discharged so near, but it may have been stage play.

† "Munday the 15 April, 1644, to make tenements in the roome of it." MS. note in a copy of Howes' Stow, at Thirlestane House, in the Phillips collection, quoted in the 'Academy' of October 28th, 1882, by Mr. Furnival.

‡ Ibid. The Blackfriars "players' playhouse," was pulled down on the 6th August, 1655, "and tenements built in the rome."

and conducted to the Charter-house, whence on several occasions she passed through the outskirts of London before her coronation, which was delayed, it is said, on account of the difficulty of finding a Catholic bishop to bless the heretic. On the 14th January, 1559, however, she made her solemn progress from the Tower in state to Westminster, every step of which was minutely chronicled,* with the decorations of each street-corner and gate, the wondrous pageants and subtleties, the dreary verses in English and Latin, the children that "made orations," the beatitudes at the Conduit in Cheap, and above all, the famous presentation at the door of St. Peter's Church† of a Bible in English. In Cheapside, we are told, her grace smiled "for that she had heard one say 'Remember old King Henry theyhgt.'" The citizens were charmed to see "how many nose-gays did her grace receive at poor women's hands; how oft-times stayed she her chariot, when she sawe any simple body offer to speak to her grace; a branche of rosemary geven to her grace with a supplication by a poor woman about Flete bridge, was seen in her chariot till her grace came to Westminster."

Elizabeth, like most strong sovereigns, was popular in the city, and she retained her popularity, in spite of a few demonstrations of the old Tudor temper, to the end of her life. People never forgot that her great-grandfather had been a mayor.‡ True, there was a strong

* Allen has reprinted a scarce tract (vol. i. p. 254), which is devoted to an account of the "Passage of our most dread soveriegn Lady Quene Elizabeth through the city of London to Westminster." It was printed by Tottill in 1559.

† St. Peter's in Cheap was not rebuilt after the Great Fire.

‡ Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, just a century before the queen's accession. The citizens had good cause to cherish his memory, for he left an enormous sum, 1000*l.*, equal to perhaps 30,000*l.* in our money, to poor householders.

Catholic party among the citizens at first, led by Sir Thomas White,* the founder of St. John's College, who, indeed, had much cause to complain of the reformers' zeal. In parliament, where he sat for Southampton, he opposed the change of religion, but "to every Protestant the Mass was identified with the fires of Smithfield, while the Prayer-book which it displaced was hallowed by the memories of the Martyrs."† This, the natural effect of Mary's ruthless persecutions, turned the citizens into vehement Protestants, and it did not wholly lose its influence for a hundred years. The excesses of the Puritans in the time of Charles I. and the Commonwealth turned popular feeling a different way, but from 1558 to 1658, or from the accession of queen Elizabeth to the death of Oliver Cromwell, London was animated with a religious fervour which prevailed over every political or civic feeling such as had previously moved them.

Commercial enterprise took a new direction from the extension of English naval power. "Merchant adventurers" formed companies and obtained charters.‡ Trade with Flanders flagged when Alva ruined Antwerp; but the refugees brought with them fresh ideas and aspirations, as well as fresh methods of business. The Royal Exchange, which Elizabeth opened in 1570, was an avowed imitation of the bourses of the Low Countries. The old traditions of a guild merchant were unconsciously revived in it, though Sir Thomas Gresham had no idea that he was superseding one of the most ancient institutions of his city. The next movement, that which

* Mayor at the trial of the lady Jane, in 1553. See above, p. 316.

† Green, ii. 303.

‡ The company of so-called Merchant Adventurers obtained their first charter from Henry VII., and that from Elizabeth in 1564, the Turkey Company in 1579, and the East India Company in 1600.

resulted eventually in the formation of the Bank of England, took its rise about the same time, and Sir Thomas Gresham, at the sign of the *Grasshopper* in Lombard Street, was one of the first goldsmiths who began to develop into bankers.* As the trade of Flanders died away under Spanish oppression, that of London increased, and in the markets of the city "the gold and sugar of the new world were found side by side with the cotton of India, the silks of the east, and the woollen stuffs of England itself."† The queen's statue in the Exchange was an acknowledgment of the helps to trade which her policy afforded; and her punctual payment of crown debts, and abolition of benevolences and such illegal exactions, coupled with the reform of the coinage, gave general satisfaction. The steady support of the city undoubtedly tended to strengthen her government. Money, ships, and men were forthcoming at every emergency. In fact, the citizens were far more inclined for war than the queen herself; and when the generation that had lived under Mary, and had breathed the air of Smithfield reeking with the smoke of human sacrifices, began to pass away, a little of the old temperament showed itself again. In 1586 the whole city was illuminated, bonfires blazed at every corner, tapestry was hung on many a house-front, bells were rung, the poor were feasted, and all because Babington's conspiracy had been detected and Mary Stuart condemned. The queen wrote a letter of thanks to the mayor on the occasion, and the demonstrations of joy were repeated a little

* See Mr. Price's 'Handbook of London Bankers,' p. 66. Messrs. Martin and Co., 68, Lombard Street, occupy the site of the *Grasshopper*, and claim to represent the original firm. The sign was abolished in 1770, and lost in 1794. (See below, chapter xiii.)

† Green, ii. 389.

later when news came of the final tragedy at Fotheringay.*

The military and naval preparations to oppose the Armada were watched by the citizens with anxious eyes. Elizabeth asked London for fifteen ships and five thousand men. To this demand the citizens replied with thirty ships and ten thousand sailors, while the trained bands, to the number of ten thousand more, paraded each evening at the Artillery Ground † in Spital Fields. We may be sure that all London poured out by river and road to the famous review at Tilbury, and when the flotilla of Philip was finally defeated, Elizabeth attended a solemn service in St. Paul's on the 24th November, 1588. She was conducted from the choir to a closet made on the north wall of the church, whence she could hear the discourse of bishop Pierce of Salisbury, at the Cross, and she afterwards returned through the church and dined in London House with bishop Aylmer. Seven years later, also in November, a special service of thanksgiving was held for the queen's long reign, when bishop Fletcher, who had succeeded Aylmer, preached a sermon in praise of Elizabeth.‡ When at length she died, the grief of the citizens was marked by the most lively tokens. Monuments were erected to her memory in the churches, with epitaphs in which her virtues were set forth in language worthy of

* There are notices of these events in nearly every city register. See Smith's 'Topography,' p. 51.

† Artillery, it is hardly necessary to observe, originally meant archery. The history of the Honourable Artillery Company is very interesting. The Guild of St. George which presided over it, was instituted by James I. in spite of the statute of Edward VI., and is perhaps the only guild besides the guild merchant now existing.

‡ Sparrow Simpson, 'Old St. Paul's,' p. 227. Aylmer died in 1594, and Fletcher was appointed in the following year, that of the thanksgiving.

Euphues.* When her funeral passed to Westminster there was "such a general sighing, groaning and weeping, as the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man, neither doth any history mention any people, time, or state, to make like lamentation for the death of their sovereign." †

Such were the personal relations of Elizabeth and the citizens. Of the political history of London during her reign there is less to tell. We have on several occasions outbreaks of apprentices, but it is impossible to assign any great meaning to them. As in all oligarchical periods the lower classes were more or less oppressed. Though the mayor and aldermen were much engaged in the regulation of the charities, pauperism increased to an alarming extent. Sturdy beggars, who gave themselves out as disbanded soldiers from the wars in Flanders, infested every road, and in 1593 the evil grew to such a height that the mayor was commanded to suppress it within three miles of London. Rioting, in which the apprentices were but too willing to join, ensued, and in the very year, 1595, which saw the rejoicings for Elizabeth's long reign, five unhappy wretches were condemned for sedition at the Guildhall, and were hanged upon Tower Hill. Among such fiery materials the authorities had no difficulty over and over again in finding soldiers, and on one memorable occasion the lord mayor and aldermen being at service in St. Paul's received a message from the queen asking them to raise a certain number of men for immediate service. Before night a thousand were enrolled, being chiefly, no doubt,

* Many sets of these verses are in Stow's 'Survey.' These monuments were set up also in many country churches. I have observed that for some unexplained reason they are nearly as obnoxious as hatchments to restorers, and few of them survive.

† Howe's Stow.

impressed from the casual wards and the streets, and were so rapidly equipped that the next morning they were ready to march for Dover. Their services, as it turned out, were not required, and they were dismissed to their homes, as many, that is, we must suppose, as had homes, within twenty-four hours. Essex, in his silly attempt at the close of Elizabeth's reign, reckoned on the assistance of one of the sheriffs, who commanded a force of a thousand trained-band men, but while he was demanding "munitions of war" from the armourers in Gracechurch Street, Burghley had proclaimed him a traitor in Cheapside. It is curious to note the appearance of the bishop once more among the civic dignitaries on this occasion. When Essex attempted to return to his house at the Outer Temple, the bishop, we are told, had posted a number of men at Ludgate to oppose him, and so effectually that having had a drink in Friday Street, perhaps at the classic *Mermaid*, which must have been well known to his companion, Southampton, he turned back, St. Paul's Chain was lifted up to let him pass, and he descended to Queenhithe, whence he took his way home by water.

This event, of little importance in the city annals, is yet the turning point in the career of Shakespeare.* He was the friend of the seditious earls. He may have been implicated in their insurrection. Certain it is that their fall, the death of Essex, the imprisonment of Southampton, the banishment of Pembroke,† left an indelible mark on his mind. He had prospered in London. His subordinate share in Burbage's Theatre at Blackfriars

* See Mr. Stopford Brooke's 'Primer of English Literature,' p. 99.

† Whose mother, "learned, good, and wise," is immortalised in Ben Jonson's epitaph. She lived in Crosby Place. See above p. 290; and Mr. Rendle on the Globe Playhouse, Harrison's 'England' (New Shakespeare Society), part ii., appendix i.

had blossomed into the proprietorship of the Globe, which had been built in 1599 on the opposite bank. He had made money and fame. He had paid his father's debts, and bought an estate in his native town. Essex was beheaded in the Tower on the 19th February, 1601, and the populace of the city, though they had declined to join his standard, showed their sympathy by waylaying the headsman and beating him as he returned homeward from performing his hideous task. From this melancholy year a change comes over the spirit of the poet. 'Julius Cæsar' was published in 1601, "and we may have scattered through the telling of the great Roman's fate the expression of Shakespeare's sorrow for the ruin of Essex." The times, as Hamlet, whose tragedy next appeared, asserts, were "out of joint." It is impossible not to see the queen's old age and impending death reflected in many ways. We are reminded of the old age of Edward III. Shakespeare was already "awearied of the world," and in the five years that follow he wrote the more melancholy of his plays, 'Othello,' for example, and 'Lear,' and dwelt on "the darker sins of men, the unpitying fate which slowly gathers round and falls on men, the avenging wrath of conscience, the cruelty and punishment of weakness, the treachery, lust, jealousy, ingratitude, madness of men, the follies of the great, and the fickleness of the mob,"* and as the "bright and occidental star" of Elizabeth's life sank at length in gloom, his genius reflects the universal sadness with which the new era of the Stuarts was ushered in.

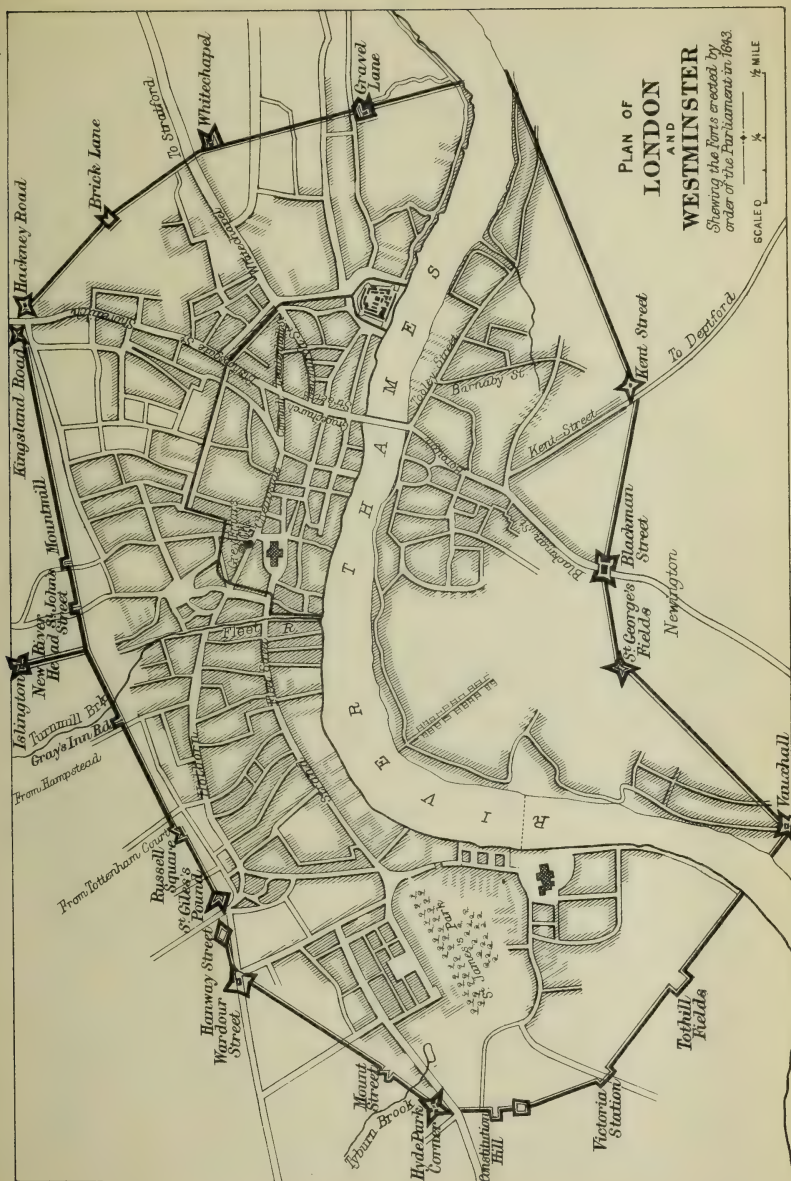
* Brooke, p. 100.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WAR, THE PLAGUE, AND THE FIRE.

THERE was no part of the kingdom more inclined than London to acknowledge peaceably the accession of James I. Amid the popular lamentation for Elizabeth the heralds proclaimed her successor in Cheap and at the other accustomed places, and four days afterwards the new king sent to thank the lord mayor for "his great forwardness in that just and honourable action." The favour of the city, as James probably knew, was worth having, and he hastened to offer it "hereby a taste of our thankful mind for the same." The lord mayor and aldermen met the king on his arrival at Stamford Hill, having sent one of the sheriffs as far as Waltham. The other sheriff was ill, and indeed London was never so unhealthy as then. It was computed that more than thirty thousand deaths occurred that year from plague alone. The building of houses in the suburbs was forbidden, as it had already been by Elizabeth, players were silenced, and Bartholomew Fair suppressed. But James very prudently stopped when he had reached the Charterhouse, and deferred his first visit to London till the plague was stayed—about a year later.

The loan of 60,000*l.* on the one side, the indiscriminate bestowal of knighthood on the other, and the disputes about precedency which ensued ; the confirmation by charter of the Thames Conservancy ; the settlement of



Stanford's Geog. Encl.

London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

the question of metage, and the cleansing—for the last time—of the old fosse round the walls, are the chief civic events of the first years of the seventeenth century. In 1609, James was made free of the cloth-workers' company, to the great envy of the merchant taylors, who at a grand entertainment showed him reproachfully the roll of kings, princes, archbishops, and dukes that had belonged to their fraternity. They had to be satisfied with Prince Henry, who was immediately enrolled, and presented with a purse of gold, which so pleased the boy that he called upon all his attendants to follow his example and join the ranks of the company.

It is strange to observe continued proclamations against the increase of buildings. The city being overcrowded it might have been thought that an extension of suburbs would have been a safeguard against the frequent visitations of the plague; but these proclamations were constantly issued at intervals even by Oliver Cromwell, and offenders punished in the Star Chamber, without any effect, except to drive settlers to the remoter villages, such as Islington, Greenwich, or St. Marylebone, and to render the overgrown town more unwieldy still. Two slight rectifications of the city boundaries (in reality consequent on the changes caused by the suppression of the monasteries) may be noted here, as probably the last additions of jurisdiction which London received. As far back as 1570 a dispute which arose as to the lord mayor's right to exercise his authority in the new district now springing up about Ely Place in Holborn was settled by an acknowledgment that the precinct was within the city.* Similar disputes had constantly taken place as to the sites of the suppressed religious houses, and in his second charter king James surveys and defines

* See further on this subject in vol. ii. chapter xx.

the city jurisdiction. The places named are the "late dissolved priory of the Church of Trinity, near Aldgate, commonly called Creed Church Street, or the Duke's Place ;" * St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield ; the "late dissolved house or priory of Preaching Friars within and at Ludgate, London, commonly called Black Friars ; and also the late dissolved house or priory of Friars of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, called White Friars ; and also the inn or liberty of Cold Herberge, otherwise Cold Harburgh, and Cold Herburgh Lane." Yet the inhabitants of these precincts were specially exempted from the payment of certain taxes, and from the duty of holding certain civic offices, so long did the old "odour of sanctity" hang about the "rookeries from which the birds had been chased."

An anecdote, which is probably authentic, gives us some idea of the estimation in which the shrewd citizens held their Scottish king.† James was displeased because he could not obtain the loan of a sum of money which he wanted. "Being somewhat transported, he said that he would remove his own court, with all the records of the Tower, and the courts of Westminster Hall, to another place, with further expressions of his indignation. The lord mayor calmly heard all, and at last answered, 'Your Majesty hath power to do what you please, and your city of London will obey accordingly ; but she humbly desires that when your Majesty shall remove your courts, you would please to leave the Thames behind you.'"

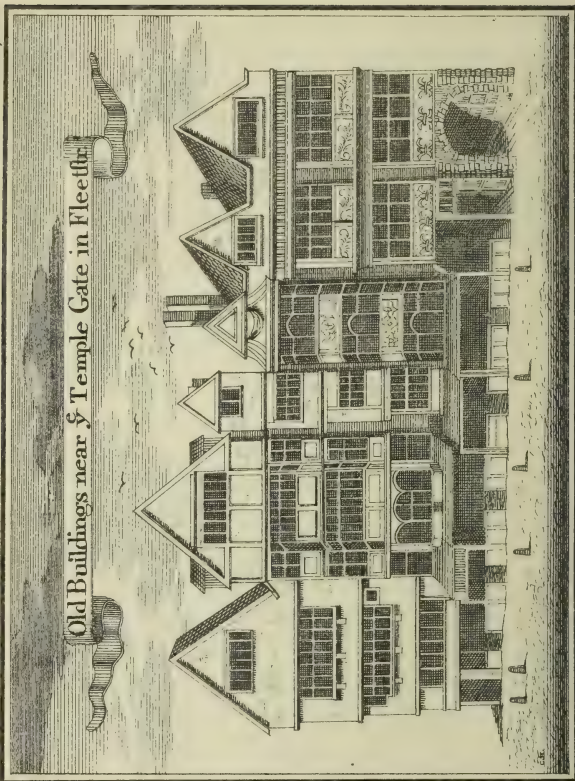
The temper of the citizens was indeed changed. The

* See Maitland, i. 291.

† Howell's 'Londinopolis,' p. 19. He tells the story with evident pleasure, but qualifies it in the index as "A factious saying of the Lord Mayor's to King James." He does not give the lord mayor's name.

From an engraving published by John Bowles.

To face p. 335.



influence of Protestantism acting on two successive generations, and the spread of a certain smattering of learning, coupled with that self-conceit which always characterises the newly educated, must have inclined the Londoners of this period to the dogmatic views in religious matters which such moderate counsellors as Whitgift, or Hooker, or Fuller endeavoured in vain to direct. We have a full picture of this aspect of the times in the almost contemporary works of Izaak Walton, who was a wholesale linen merchant at the corner of Chancery Lane, and who, through his mother, a Cranmer, and his wife, a Ken, was connected with several bishops, and acquainted more or less intimately with the history of every eminent churchman of his own time, and the generation before his. Of none is his portrait more complete than of Hooker. The great controversy with Travers raged chiefly in the Temple opposite Walton's own abode.* Hooker had been appointed Master in 1585, before Walton was born, and had died at Bourne in 1600, before Walton came to live in Chancery Lane; but when he wrote of the generation before his own, he had the scene before his eyes, and when he mentioned the religious controversies of their day, it was not without reference to those of his own.

Walter Travers, though he was connected by marriage with Hooker's family,† had been his rival for the mastership, and when he was disappointed had shown his Christian temper by using the subordinate post of lecturer to preach against the opinions of his superior. The lawyers took sides, and, indeed, the whole town, where, as Walton

* There is a contemporary view of the Temple Gate. See the accompanying reproduction.

† John Travers, Walter's brother, married Alice, sister of Richard Hooker. ('Herald and Genealogist,' iii. 27.)

says, even the shopwomen were keen controversialists. Hooker, in a sermon preached several years before at St. Paul's Cross, had made use of expressions with regard to predestination which differed strongly from those held by a majority of the citizens, and Travers had the support of many people of all ranks. The contest was carried on at every opportunity, Travers frequently in the afternoon combating the opinions expressed by Hooker in the forenoon.* There was no regular rupture between the two, and neither party forgot the rules of courtesy, yet there is something unseemly, to our modern ideas at least, in the whole dispute. It had, however, one result which none can regret, the composition by Hooker of his book on 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' a work which probably more than any other influenced the settlement of the Church of England under Elizabeth. In 1592 it was registered at Stationers' Hall as consisting of eight books, and the first four were published in 1594. A year later Hooker's connection with the Temple ceased, on his appointment to the rectory of Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury.

Since Hooker's time everything at the Temple has changed, except perhaps the Middle Temple Hall, which was built in 1572, and has not been substantially altered, having been spared by the Great Fire of 1666, as well as by meddling treasurers since, except that the exterior stonework was renewed in the middle of the last century.† In 1601 a play of Shakespeare's ('Twelfth

* "Hooker, it was said, preached Canterbury in the forenoon, and Travers Geneva in the afternoon. The Benchers were divided."—Cunningham, 'Handbook,' ii. 802.

† The little fountain had associations of its own, and was made the background of one of Dickens' most pathetic scenes. But the vulgar horror of age and quaintness which has ruined so much else in the Temple has transformed it within the past few years, and it retains now no more

Night') was acted here, and the great dramatist, by an anachronism, makes it a rendezvous of Falstaff and the Prince.* Of the other buildings there is nothing left to recall Hooker. I have already spoken of the chapel, in which not a trace of old work has been permitted to remain. It would have been interesting to see the pulpit from which Hooker and Travers alternately expounded the doctrines of the Church and of dissent. Pepys records a visit to "the Temple Church, looking with pleasure on the monuments and epitaphs"† which the fire had spared, but which were removed almost in our own day.‡ Among them were tablets to the memory of a son of Coke and of a daughter-in-law of Littleton, who was honoured by an epitaph containing the well-known couplet—

"For while this jewel here is set
The grave is but a cabinet."

All religious questions were fiercely debated in the city at this time, and the tendency of a majority of the citizens was undoubtedly towards the Genevan doctrine. This was in part caused it is probable by the apathy of the clergymen who enjoyed city livings. They held preaching to be no part of their duty. True, before the Reformation preaching had been rare in a church, and after it preachers' mouths were closed by the strict enforcement of the power of licensing. But had the incumbents of the city livings exerted themselves in this particular during the reign of James and the early years

beauty or picturesqueness than if it belonged to a nursery garden or a suburban villa.

* 'Henry IV.' part i. act iii. scene 3.

† Oct. 22, 1666.

‡ They are now, at least those which have survived, under the bellows of the organ. The church before it was completely altered is described in 'The Churches of London,' by Godwin and Britton, vol. i.

of Charles, the very strong part taken by the citizens in the subversion of the Church might have been modified if not prevented. As it was, preachers were appointed in many parishes. Preaching or lecturing seldom took place on Sunday.* The parishioners paid the lecturers' salaries, and the rectors were in many cases obliged therefore to leave to them the choice of suitable persons. In the result, as might have been and probably was foreseen, the lecturers became practically the parish parsons; and though archbishop Laud made a vehement attempt to abolish them, they held their ground, and under the Commonwealth completely supplanted the rectors. The famous 'Book of Sports' found no favour with them, and the first open difference between the court and the city broke out when the lord mayor stopped the king's carriages as they were being driven through the streets during the hours of divine service. James was bitterly enraged, and inquired how many kings there were in England besides himself. But the mayor, George Bolles, submitted with a protest, and similarly, in 1623, Sir Martin Lumley obeyed an arbitrary command of the king, who came himself to the Guildhall to reprimand the citizens for an insult to Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador. A wretched fellow was actually arrested and whipped through the city merely for making disrespectful remarks.

When James had been five years upon the throne, there was born in the very midst of the city, nay in the very midst of Cheap, a child who, though his life has little to do with the history of London, must yet be

* At St. Margaret's, Lothbury, in 1583, Mr. Alexander Shepherd proposed to preach on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but the parishioners preferred Sunday forenoon and Thursday night. Parish Books, quoted by Mr. Freshfield, '*Archæologia*,' xiv. 67

mentioned as one of whom citizens have the greatest reason to be proud. In Bread Street, in 1608, every house must have had its sign, as the idea of numbering the doors had not yet occurred to anybody. Among the signs was one very like a coat-of-arms. It represented a spread eagle, and was, indeed, the bearing of an old but decayed family named Milton. Its head at this time was a scrivener—"an ingenious man," says Aubrey, who "delighted in music and composed many songs now in print, especially that of Oriana." He loved his son's pursuits, and encouraged him to make verses while still quite a boy, as the poet himself says*—

"In close affinity, we sympathize
In social arts and kindred studies sweet."

The boy loved the play, and in his poems are many allusions which show him to have been fond even of comedy; but the most distinct point to such tragical pieces as 'Romeo and Juliet,' or 'Hamlet.' Above all, however, he loved London, and

" the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace high triumph hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence and judge the prize."

The tournaments close by in Cheap were not yet wholly forgotten. He was able to call them up, and many another scene which the Great Fire obliterated for us. Had it been healthy, London must indeed have been a city which a man could love—

"Too blest abode! no loveliness we see
In all the earth, but it abounds in thee."

* In a Latin poem 'Ad Patrem,' translated by Cowper, and quoted with other notices, in Knight's 'London,' ii. 98.

And one of his finest sonnets is written in apprehension of an assault upon the city—

“ Captain, or colonel, or knight in arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honour did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.”

Milton was living at this time in Aldersgate Street. He afterwards removed to “Mr. Russell’s, in St. Bride’s Churchyard,” and during the Commonwealth he had a house on the south side of St. James’s Park, into which he had a private door, so as conveniently to attend on Cromwell at Whitehall. At the restoration he took refuge in St. Bartholomew’s Close, which, perhaps, of all Miltonian localities, so to speak, is the least altered. ‘Paradise Lost’ was composed in the rural Holborn, or the completely civic Jewin Street, and he died in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, at a house which used to be pointed out long after, very near the melancholy enclosure of Bunhill Fields. A monument to his memory exists in the parish church, where his grave was found and examined in 1790.*

The reign of Charles I. opened with every omen against it. The plague raged so violently that the customary procession through the city was omitted, as was the public reception of queen Henrietta Maria on her arrival from France. Parliament for the same cause was adjourned to Oxford. To add to the miseries of the citizens, it soon became known that the king had even more overbearing ideas than his father, and a resolute opposition was organised among the commons when Charles attempted to exact a loan of 100,000*l*. It was absolutely refused, and the imprisonment of a number of those citizens who were known to have taken part in

* See Knight, &c.

the refusal only embittered the quarrel and confirmed the opposition. When a parliament was called in 1628, the king had the mortification to see no fewer than twenty-seven of his prisoners returned as members for various places.* Ship-money was also stoutly refused, and had the city mob not given legitimate cause of offence on one memorable occasion, the whole history of the reign of Charles in London would be comprised in a list of lawless exactions and lawful resistance. But the murder of Doctor Lamb cannot in any way be defended. The wretched man was looked upon as one of the principal instruments of oppression, and in June, 1628, he unfortunately ventured into the city, where being recognised he was set upon by the rabble, dragged about the streets, beaten and kicked until death released him from their hands. The king came himself to the rescue, but in vain. The mob loudly declared that they had judged him and found him guilty, and Charles had to return insulted and baffled. An order from the council to the lord mayor and sheriffs to bring the rioters to justice produced no effect. They were then summoned to Whitehall and threatened with the confiscation of their charter, but persisted in reporting that the murderers of Lamb could not be found. Four years afterwards, however, in 1632, some of them were apprehended; but the king had meanwhile imposed a fine on the citizens, and from this time on there was no truce between London and Charles. Each year saw some aggravation of the king's oppressive conduct. Ship-money, tonnage, and poundage were imposed with the utmost rigour. Vassall, a wealthy merchant, who re-

* Allen, i. 336. The general history of this miserable period is so well known that I confine myself in the text to the most prominent points and of those to what concerns the city only.

sisted, and defended his refusal before the barons of the exchequer, was condemned and imprisoned. But one merchant who happened to be a member of the House of Commons was more successful. John Rolle, a Cornishman, was in business in the city. He refused to pay the illegal tax, and his goods were seized by officers of the customs. The house took up the question, and, after several adjournments, voted (while the speaker was forcibly held in the chair), that Rolle "ought to have privilege both in person and goods."

Charles issued writs for ship-money in 1634, and the citizens protested in the most solemn manner, but ineffectually. Rightly or wrongly, they believed that Strafford meditated "a plundering of the city, and putting it to fine and ransom," and it was currently reported that he had threatened to hang some of the aldermen. The discovery of this so-called army plot sealed his fate. Twenty thousand citizens petitioned the House of Lords against him. A mob attacked the residence of the Spanish ambassador in Bishopsgate, and the lord mayor could with difficulty protect it. The professional preachers fanned the flames with violent diatribes against the fallen minister, and six thousand citizens presented themselves at Westminster and clamoured for justice. When the Bill of Attainder had been passed, the hesitation of Charles was overcome by similar means, and the earl's execution on Tower Hill was made the occasion of open rejoicings, and was observed almost as a public holiday. The bells of the churches rang out, and when evening came on bonfires blazed in many of the streets.

The king, to whom his greatest enemies never imputed a want of personal courage, who in the worst of times refused the services of a body-guard, and had once,

as we have seen, faced a howling mob of the lowest class of the city, now took a more extraordinary, and in some respects a still more courageous step. His attempted seizure of the five members in the House of Commons is well known. Defeated in this design, and well aware that the prey he sought had taken refuge among the citizens, he boldly drove to the Guildhall,* having previously ordered a meeting of the common council to be convened. He made them a speech, demanding the apprehension of the accused members, and taking the opportunity of assuring his audience of his attachment to the Protestant religion, which he promised to defend against "Papists and separatists." To this speech he obtained no answer. The sheriffs, indeed, received his commands with respect, but that was all. He dined with one of them, "who was of the two thought the least inclined to his service."† In the afternoon he returned to Whitehall in his coach, surrounded by an indignant crowd of the citizens, who vociferated "Privilege of Parliament," as he passed. Five days went by without any return to the writs he had issued to the sheriffs, and with gradually growing rumours that the trained bands of the city were about to escort the five members‡ to Westminster in triumph, and to constitute themselves "guardians of the parliament, the kingdom, and the king." But Charles had no mind to such protection. On the 10th he left Whitehall for Hampton Court, and the following day the sheriffs conducted the five members to Westminster by water, guarded by forty long boats armed with small pieces of ordnance, and gaily decorated with flags. The sheriffs were called in

* 3rd January, 1642.

† Clarendon, 'History,' vol. i. See Green, iii. 214.

‡ They had been lodged very openly in a house in Coleman Street, and daily visited by members of parliament and the chief citizens.

and publicly thanked by the House of Commons, and an indemnity passed for their conduct. Two companies of the trained bands were then told off for constant duty at Westminster; and custody of the Tower and its stores was given to the civic authorities.*

Meanwhile, the king on his side making preparations for war, the commons ordered the "Militia of London" to train and exercise themselves daily in various open places not more than three miles from the city. The lord mayor, Sir Richard Gurney, was suspected of a leaning towards the court party. When the parliament asked the city for money, he received a letter from the king bidding him to warn the citizens of his displeasure in case they should comply with the demand. On this the parliament issued a counter-proclamation, and the lord mayor was actually arrested, arraigned before what remained of a house of peers, deprived of his office, declared incapable of ever holding it again, and committed to the custody of his own sheriffs in the Tower. The king, having declared war on the 22nd August, and having commenced his march on London, a prodigious crowd, which included even women and children, assembled to make a new fortification. Charles, after the undecisive battle of Edge Hill, continued his advance and occupied Brentford on the 12th November, after a sharp fight in which the forces of the parliament were defeated. The approach of peril nerved the citizens to greater exertions. The trained bands showed such a formidable front that the king retired first to Reading and then to Oxford. Shops were shut and apprentices enrolled, proclamation being made that when their services were no longer required the masters should

* It is asserted that Charles carried off the contents of the Mint—the property of the goldsmiths—on this occasion, amounting to 200,000*l*. See Price, 'Handbook of London Bankers,' p. 61.

reinstate them in their former places. The new mayor, Pennington, was devoted to the cause of the parliament, and during the winter the inner wall was strengthened, and a fresh line of defence completed.

This new fortification consisted of earthworks with forts at various points. It took in both the city and Westminster, and the suburbs as far as Shoreditch on the north and St. George's Fields on the south. East and west it extended from Hyde Park to Mile End and the Lea. Redoubts were made at Hackney, where not long ago some remnants of the banks might still be seen; at the upper pond of the New River;* at the Islington pound; at Southampton House in Holborn where probably Castle Street may commemorate it; at St. Giles'; at the east end of "Tyburn Road," close to what is now Rathbone Place; and at the head of Wardour Street. On the western side a large earthwork was long known as "Oliver's Mount," and is commemorated by the name of Mount Street, Grosvenor Square. At Hyde Park Corner, at Tothill Fields, and various places on the south side of the Thames were similar structures.

To the expenses of the war the city, which had grumbled at the comparatively small exactions of the king, cheerfully contributed, the sum of 10,000*l.* a week being demanded by the parliament and paid by the citizens. The discovery of a plot formed by Sir Nicholas Crisp, a former civic dignitary, for seizing the city, gave rise to fresh exertions, as did a futile proclamation by the king fulminated from Oxford, in which London was placed under a kind of interdict. The answer of the citizens† was the expenditure of 50,000*l.* more in

* See below, p. 357.

† "The city of London was the very soul of the cause."—Maitland, i. 380, where even the speeches at the civic banquets may be found in full.

improvement of the fortifications and other defences, and an almost riotous concourse of the people at Westminster to petition the parliament against any reconciliation with the king. The common council desired the city companies to collect and lend 500,000*l.* to the parliament, and sent six regiments to raise the siege of Gloucester. More money and more men were forthcoming when required, and there can be no kind of doubt that the determined attitude of London decided the great civil war. Charles learned, when it was too late, what a glance at history might have told him long before, that the side of London was eventually the winning side in every struggle: and that in oppressing the citizens he had ruined his own cause. The relief of Gloucester, mainly achieved by the trained bands, was the "turning point of the war." *

The citizen soldiers were not, it is true, always victorious. At Newbury, Essex was utterly routed, but the Londoners mustered strongly again under Manchester at Naseby, and on the 19th June, 1645, five days after that decisive victory, both houses of parliament attended a thanksgiving service in the old church of the Grey Friars,† and afterwards dined with the citizens at the Grocers' Hall, in the Poultry. After dinner all joined in singing the inspiring words of the great psalm‡ of trust and triumph which Luther had used on similar occasions, "God is our refuge and strength: a very present help in trouble."

So ended the war, as far as the king was concerned. London had now to reckon with the army. The submission of Charles was offered to the lord mayor, aldermen, and commons. He expressed his willingness to comply with the demands of the parliament in every-

* Green, iii. 226. † Christ Church, Newgate Street. ‡ Psa. xlv

thing, "for settling truth and peace." But it was too late. Whether he was sincere or not, both parliament and city had lost the power of accepting his surrender. They had called a monster into existence, and were at its mercy. A tumult, raised in all probability by disbanded royalist soldiers, gave Fairfax occasion to occupy London. The insurgents were encountered near the Leadenhall, and put to the rout. The soldiers were now masters of the city. The battle of Cornhill, as it may be called, though little known in history, had momentous consequences. Soon after the arrival of the army a demand of 50,000*l.* was made upon the citizens. They could not, or would not comply, and the soldiers threatened, and in part carried out their threat, to dismantle the fortifications. Never, perhaps, since the Norman Conquest, had London been brought so low. Colonel Pride, who in the following year was to render himself famous by administering his "purge" to the house of commons, was sheriff of Surrey, and took the opportunity of clearing Southwark of playhouses. The citizens were terrified at the approach of this uncompromising officer, but Fairfax kept order, and people began to look for a renewal of tranquillity on the return of the victorious Cromwell from his successful campaign in the north. This took place in the beginning of December, 1648. He immediately sent a couple of regiments into the city to secure any money they could find, and some 20,000*l.* was obtained by the simple process of taking it from the halls of the companies. Long afterwards, the habit, which seems so strange nowadays, of keeping cash in hand was practised universally, and Pepys we may remember, buried some money in his garden on the approach of the fire. The soldiers were billeted upon private families, the horses were sent to the inns.

Probably the citizens never spent a more miserable Christmas. The old festivities of the season were strictly forbidden. The "sour-visaged saints" demanded of the common council pay and provisions for the army till the ensuing 25th March, and only allowed fourteen days for deliberation, assessment, and collection. The reaction which had set in showed itself in the election of a royalist lord mayor, Abraham Reynardson, and no doubt the occupation of the city was chiefly caused by the existence of this and other signs of a change in the feelings of the people. By one of those curious mistakes which even the greatest rulers of men sometimes make, the council of officers greatly intensified the smouldering loyalty of the citizens by the king's execution in January, as it not only awoke any personal feeling they may have retained towards a monarch who certainly cannot be said to have treated them well: but it endued an innocent boy, of whom so far no harm was known, with all the traditional regard which London had paid to the crown. Reynardson absolutely refused to proclaim the abolition of royalty, and was committed to the Tower and heavily fined. A new mayor was elected and sworn before the remnant of the house of commons with great solemnity. His name was Atkins, and he lived to suffer for that day's proceedings. On the accession of Charles II. he took Reynardson's place in the Tower, and died in confinement.

Cromwell was now about to proceed to Ireland, and Fairfax obtained 150,000*l.* from the city towards his expenses. Prior to his departure, another solemn service was held in Christ Church, and another dinner was eaten in the Grocers' Hall, when the citizens gave Fairfax a basin and ewer of beaten gold, and plate also to Cromwell, with a sum of money. The mayor, with

twelve of the aldermen, proclaimed the abolition of royalty, and things were so far settled, that no objection was openly made. As ever, the citizens above all things desired leisure for their mercantile pursuits, and the growing power of Cromwell, while it promised peace at home and protection for commerce abroad, was not unwelcome even to those who in their hearts longed for the presence of a court, and sighed amid the gloom of the presbyterian rule for the merry days of old. When Cromwell came back victorious from the decisive battle of Worcester, the citizens went out to Acton to meet him. He was feasted at Guildhall, and received everywhere as a deliverer. After he had snuffed out the last flicker of the old parliament, and had been sworn in as lord protector, the city treated him with regal honours, and the mayor received knighthood at his hands. There can be no doubt of the strong royalist feeling of the city. The person of the king was comparatively a matter of indifference. Cromwell would have done for them exceedingly well, and they would certainly have elected him had he allowed it. On his death they turned instinctively to Charles II., and General Monk's first overtures were made to the mayor and aldermen.

As this was the last time but one that the Londoners exercised their ancient electoral privilege, it excites a greater interest than the king's actual entry, which has been so fully described.* The negotiations commenced upon the rupture between Monk and the parliament, when that astute general, instead of writing to the citizens, sent a private messenger to the lord mayor, who may have communicated some of the design in hand. Be this as it may, the mayor invited Monk to a dinner, after

* The negotiations are given in great detail by Maitland, chiefly from Rushworth.

which he and the members of the corporation repaired to the Guildhall, where he made a speech, in which he apologised for some recent military proceedings which had frightened the city into the idea that its independence would be compromised. He further, as an earnest of his good intentions, communicated the contents of a letter which he had written to the parliament advising the issue of writs for a new house of commons; and though he did not openly acquaint the meeting with his whole counsel in the matter of a restoration, he contrived to show them that in what he did he had the interests of the city rather than of the parliament at heart, and that, come what may, he felt sure they would eventually be satisfied with his course of action. By such vague phrases he restored or awakened their confidence, and a mutual engagement was entered into by which he and they were bound to stand or fall together. He charged them to keep order, and, having replaced the members of parliament who had so long been excluded, he contrived that an ordinance should be passed restoring the ancient liberty, and was in gratitude immediately elected general of the civic forces, and invited for his greater security to take up his quarters in the city. He probably thought himself sufficiently safe at Charing Cross, where he had made his headquarters in Northumberland House; so he sent a grateful but vague reply, and summoned the trained bands to a grand review in Hyde Park. Early in 1660 matters took a fresh turn. Charles sent Lord Mordaunt and Sir John Grenville from Breda with a letter to the lord mayor, aldermen, and common council, as well as to Monk, the parliament, and the fleet. The mayor, Thomas Alleyne,*

* Alleyne was a member of the Grocers' Company, to which General Monk was also admitted in February, 1660. Charles II. became a member of the same company in July.

assembled his fellow citizens, and introduced Mordaunt and Grenville. The letter was read amid the wildest acclamations of joy. The messengers were immediately presented with a handsome gratuity, and before the meeting broke up, fourteen members of the common council were deputed to accompany them back to Holland, with a present of 10,000*l.*, and an assurance of their loyal devotion. A few days later* the new king was proclaimed at the usual places in the city, when the citizens took occasion to testify their loyalty, and no doubt their feeling of relief from the thralldom of the presbyterians, by excesses of drunkenness such as London had not seen for many a long day. The fourteen citizens who formed the deputation were knighted at Breda, and on the 29th May accompanied Charles to St. George's Fields, where the lord mayor received him, and where, before entering the city, the king was entertained in a splendid tent erected beforehand. The magnificence of his welcome has been often described, and may be summed up in a brief sentence from the amusing diary of Samuel Pepys:—"It is impossible to relate the glory of this day, expressed in the clothes of them that rid, and their horses and horse-clothes."

The events of the restoration belong to the history of England. The history of the city is concerned about a very different kind of subject. The two greatest misfortunes that ever befel it were already approaching. The intoxication of triumph was sobered by the outbreak of an epidemic of small-pox, to which the new king's brother, among thousands of others, fell a victim; but a worse disaster was impending.

I have avoided, hitherto, anything but a passing reference to the visitations of the plague. They culminated

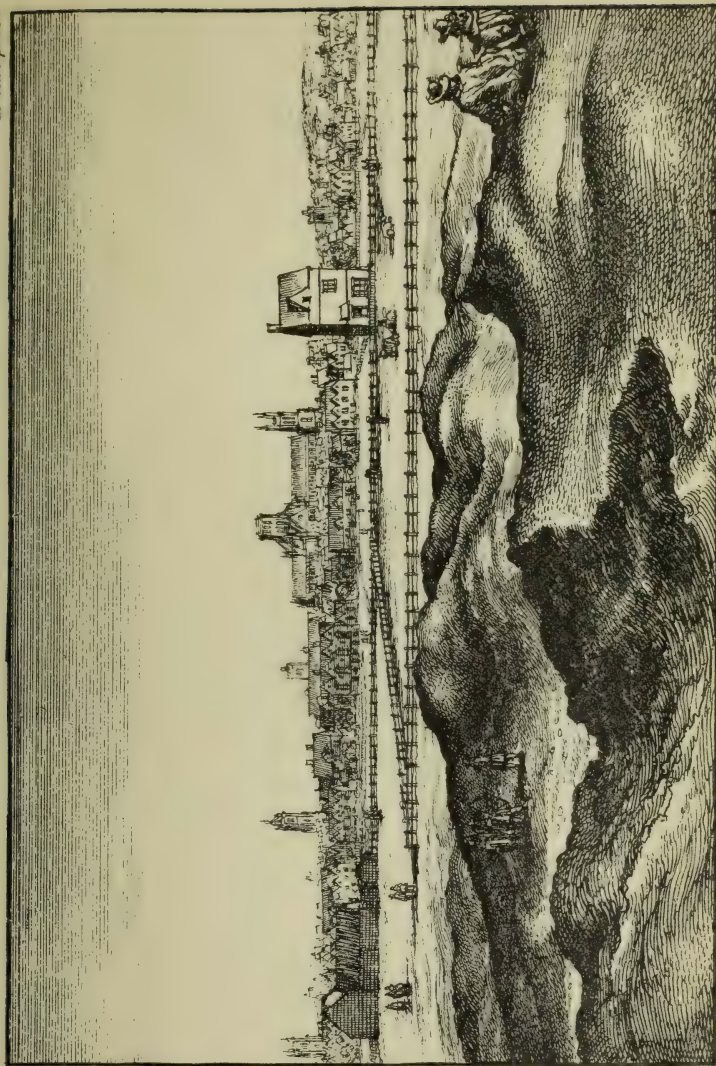
* 8th May, 1660.

in the appalling disaster of 1665. Several times had the deaths from epidemic disorders reached so high a figure that the year was afterwards described as that of the "Great Plague." Such a calamity occurred in 1349, when 50,000 people are said to have died. This may be an exaggeration, yet we have no means of testing its truth, not knowing how great was the population of the city at the time. Hallam estimated it in the twelfth century as about 40,000. Fitzstephen speaks of 80,000 fighting-men as mustering for war in his day.* In the sixteenth century we are just as much in ignorance as to the number of souls within the city boundaries. In the seventeenth, however, we have better information, yet there are astonishing discrepancies between the different estimates. Thus Howel thinks there were not fewer than a million and a half of people in London in the time of the Commonwealth,† while twenty years earlier the authorities of the Guildhall only estimated about 700,000 within the liberties. In 1682, Sir William Petty, a very careful and acute observer, reckoned the population at 672,000, inhabiting 84,000 houses. Yet another writer of the same period only made the number 530,000. On the whole, as Petty only reckoned the average number of inhabitants of each house at eight, it seems not unlikely that 672,000 is a moderate estimate.

The number of deaths from the plague, or from various epidemics, some of which were the plague, and some of a different character, is as difficult to ascertain now as the population. When the "bills of mortality" were first issued in 1603 it became easier, and before the end of the century a very accurate idea could be formed.

* Pegge suggests that an extra cypher has crept into the manuscript : but in writing of the period 80,000 would probably be lxxxM.

† 'Londinopolis' was published in 1657.



Stanfords Geo. & Estab.

LONDON FROM THE NORTH IN 1665.

After a. Print by Hollar.

London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

The plague which began in the year of queen Elizabeth's death, went on increasing year by year in its fatal powers till 1609, when no fewer than 4000 were believed to have succumbed to it. It lost its virulence by 1611, but there were probably a few deaths from it at intervals until 1625, when there was another terrific outbreak, and the deaths from all causes amounted to 54,265, of which 35,417 were attributed to the plague. In the same year, the number of christenings was only 6983. The deaths, therefore, in that, the worst plague year before 1665, were to the births as 8 to 1.

Several different kinds of disease were summarily referred to under the one word "plague." The Black Death is the significant name given to the epidemic of 1349. It had reached London in the previous November.* The first symptoms seemed in themselves sufficiently horrible to justify the name. A man apparently in perfect health would suddenly commence to vomit blood. A few minutes later he would fall down dead. Sometimes, however, his agonies would be prolonged for twelve hours, sometimes for two days. Everything he touched, every place where he rested, spread the contagion. If he survived the first stunning blow of the Black Death, his body was covered with inflammatory swellings, and it was believed that even a glance of the sick man's distorted eyes was sufficient to give the infection.

The Sweating Sickness came next.† It reached London in July 1517, and speedily decimated the citizens. Yet, compared with the Black Death, it was mildness itself, and in many cases yielded to curative treatment. The city was crowded with poor artisans,

* Hecker, 'Epidemics of the Middle Ages,' p. 20, edition of 1844.

† Hecker, p. 209.

and the insurrection known as Evil May-day, of which I gave some account in the last chapter, has been connected by many writers with the immigration of innumerable foreign workmen. But the sweating sickness attacked high and low indifferently. Ammonius, the Latin secretary of cardinal Wolsey, whose name occurs so frequently in contemporary memoirs, boasted to Sir Thomas More that his precautions were such that he and his family were perfectly safe. He died the same evening. Michaelmas and Christmas were both left unobserved, and the epidemic raged without interruption for six months, before it abated. The plague began to spread as soon as the sweating sickness subsided, and when we read of the state of London houses at the time, our only wonder is that such an overwhelming misfortune as the Great Plague of 1666 was so long in coming. Erasmus says of the dwellings of the lower classes in his time, that they were filthy beyond description. The floors were of loam, and were strewed with rushes, which were constantly put on fresh without the removal of the old, and intermixed with bones, broken victuals, and other dirt. They had probably improved very little, if at all, by the middle of the seventeenth century, and we may be sure that the Augæan filth of the city required nothing less than the Great Fire to purify it.

The water-supply, it is now generally acknowledged, is the first cause of epidemic disease. In London at the beginning of the reign of James I., it was threefold. Some water came to public conduits, like those in Cheap, by underground pipes from Tyburn. Some was drawn by water-wheels and other similar means from the Thames, polluted as it was at London Bridge.* A third source

* Every one has heard of the sick man who died when he was removed from the sound of the water-wheel near his house on the bridge.

of supply was still more dangerous : in all the suburbs, and probably also in most houses in the city itself, people depended on wells. What wells among habitations, and especially filthy habitations, become, we know now, but in the seventeenth century and much later, the idea of their danger had not been started.

Such being the conditions of existence in London, the plague now and then smouldering for a year or two, now and then breaking out as in 1603, 1625, and 1636, a long drought, which means resort to half dry and stagnant reservoirs, was sufficient to call it forth in all its strength. The heat of the summer weather in 1665 was such that the very birds of the air were imagined to languish in their flight. The 7th of June, said Pepys, was the hottest day that ever he felt in his life. The deaths from the plague, which had begun at the end of the previous year, in the suburb of St. Giles' in the Fields, at a house in Long Acre, where two Frenchmen had died of it, rose during June from 112 to 268. The entries in the diary are for four months almost continuous as to the progress of the plague. Although it was calculated that not less than 200,000 people had followed the example of the king and court, and fled from the doomed city, yet the deaths increased daily. The lord mayor, Lawrence, held his ground, as did the brave earl of Craven and General Monk, now become duke of Albemarle. Craven provided a burial-ground, the Pest Field, with a kind of cottage-hospital, in Soho ; † but the only remedy that could be devised by the united wisdom of the corporation, fortified by the presence of the duke and the earl, was to order fires in all the streets, as if the

* Hecker, for example, accounts for plagues by earthquakes, atmospheric disturbances, personal contagion, and many other things.

† See vol. ii., chapters xvii. and xxi.

weather was not already hot enough. Medical art seems to have utterly broken down. Those of the sick who were treated by a physician, only died a more painful death by cupping, scarifying, and blistering. The city rectors, too, who had come back with the king, fled from the danger, as might be expected from their antecedents, and the nonconformist lecturers who remained had overwhelming congregations wherever they preached repentance to the terror-stricken people. Distinctions of creed were forgotten before the common danger. The wildest conjectures were hazarded as to its origin. The president of the College of Physicians pronounced it to have come in a bale of flax from Holland,* while the lecturers attributed it solely to the just anger of God at the excesses which had prevailed in the kingdom since the restoration.

The symptoms were very distressing. Fever and vomiting were among the first, and every little ailment was thought premonitory, so that it was said at the time that as many died of fright as of the disease itself. Pepys mentions the terror which affected a household when a child suffered from headache. The fatal signs were glandular swellings which ran their course in a few hours, the plague spots turning to gangrene almost as soon as they appeared. The patients frequently expired the same day that they were seized, while others survived a week and even longer, only to die slowly of exhaustion from bleeding and ill-treatment in general.

The most terrible stories of premature burial were circulated. All business was suspended. Grass grew in

* 'Distinct Notions of the Plague,' by "The Explainer," 1722, p. 14. This and several other works of the kind were published about the same time, namely, during a scare occasioned by an outbreak of plague at Marseilles. Defoe's fictitious 'Diary' was among them.

the streets. No one went about. The rumbling wheels of the cart, and the cry, "Bring out your dead!" alone broke the stillness of the night. Great pits were dug in Bunhill Fields, and in Tothill Fields at Westminster, and the bodies were shot into them and covered up without coffins, without even grave-clothes, and without any funeral ceremony. In the first weeks of September the number of fatal cases rose to 1500 a day, the bills of mortality recording 24,000 deaths between the 1st and 21st of that month. Then at last it began to decline, but rose again at the beginning of October. A change of weather at length occurred, and the average declined so rapidly, that by the beginning of November the number of deaths was reduced to 1200, and before Christmas came, it had fallen to the usual number of former years. In all, the official statements enumerated 97,306 deaths during the year, and, if we add those unrecorded, a very moderate estimate of the whole mortality would place it at the appalling figure of 100,000 at least.

I have thus briefly summarised the details of this terrible event, referring for fuller particulars to the innumerable publications on the subject which appeared then, and afterwards. That the plague was ever stayed we must attribute to a cause for which as I have already hinted, sufficient allowance has not hitherto been made. Though the Great Fire of 1666 was the proximate reason, the total cessation of the epidemic must be traced to the alteration in the water-supply, which the fire made not only possible but necessary. As far back as 1620, Sir Hugh Myddelton, a public-spirited Welshman, who was a member of the goldsmiths' company, had completed his scheme for bringing water to London. He tapped a supply at Chadswell Springs in Hertfordshire, and constructing a canal nearly forty miles long,

formed a reservoir in Islington, from which to this day London obtains its water. The New River, as it is still called, was one of the greatest benefits the city ever received from a private individual. Sir Hugh was ruined, and parted with his interest in the great work to a company, reserving to himself and his heirs an annuity of 100*l.*, which has not been claimed since 1715. The first dividend was paid to the shareholders in 1633, but the water was evidently used only here and there before 1666. When the old wells were filled by the ruins after the fire, the New River water became universal. In the city as rebuilt it was everywhere laid on; and London must acknowledge Sir Hugh Myddelton to have been its greatest modern benefactor. He changed it, from having been as unhealthy as Dublin, Naples, or even Calcutta, to be one of the safest places of abode in the world. The mildest case of typhoid fever in the city now would probably occasion a greater sensation than a thousand cases of plague would have caused under the Stuarts.

Scarcely had the terrified citizens settled down once more in their old homes when a second calamity came upon them. The summer of 1666 was, if possible, hotter than that of the previous year. An easterly wind which occasionally rose almost to a gale, prevailed without intermission for weeks together. At last, when wooden houses must have become as dry as tinder, a baker's oven in Pudding Lane, near Fish Street Hill and Eastcheap, and thus to windward of the central part of the city, took fire one sultry night. The neighbours looked at it as they had looked at many fires before, but when twenty-four hours had elapsed and the flames continued to spread into the adjoining streets and lanes, here very narrow, crowded and old, they began to take alarm





A MAP or GROUNDFLOT of the City of London, and the Suburbs thereof, that is to say, all which is within the Jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor or proper the call of London by which is exactly demonstrated the present condition thereof since the last sad accident of fire. The blank space signifying the burnt part & where the houses are expressed those places yet standing.

Sold by John Owen at the White Horse in Little Brittain, next door to Little's Bartholomew's, on the 1st of April 1667.

Annotations of the Churches, and other remarkable places in this Map.

1. Cathedral of S. Paul
2. Christ Church.
3. S. Michael.
4. S. Peters by Woodstreet
5. S. Foster.
6. S. Leonard.
7. S. Ann by Aldersgate
8. S. Michael in Woodstreet.
9. S. John Zachary
10. S. Olaves
11. S. Mary Stayning
- 12.
13. S. Mary Aldermanbery
14. S. Michael Bashaw.
15. S. Laurence
16. S. Maudslins.
17. Allhallowes.
18. S. Martins in Iremorgers lane.
19. S. Olaves
20. S. Mary Colechurch
21. S. Steven Colmanstreet.
22. S. Mildred
23. S. Margaret.
24. S. Christopher
25. S. Bartholomew.
26. French Church
27. S. Benet.
28. Augustine Fryars
29. S. Martins Outwich
30. S. Michael in Cornhill
31. S. Peters
32. Allhallowes
33. S. Edmunds.
34. S. Clemens
35. S. Nicholas
36. S. Mary Woolnoth
37. S. Mary in Conwike Street
38. S. Stevens in Walbrooke.
39. S. Bennet
40. S. Pancras.
41. S. Antholms
42. Bow Church.
43. S. Matthew.
44. S. Austins
45. S. Gregory
46. S. Martins by Ludgate
47. S. Andrew.
48. S. Benet in Thamestreet
49. S. Peters.
50. S. Mary
51. S. Nicholas.
52. S. Nicholas Olaves.
53. S. Mary Somerset.
54. S. John Evangelist.
55. S. Mildred
56. Allhallowes
57. S. Mary
58. S. Thomas Apostla.
59. S. John Baptist
60. S. Michael.
61. S. James.
62. S. Martins
63. S. Mary Buttolfs lane
64. S. Swithens.
65. S. Mary in Bushlane.
66. Allhallowes great.
67. Allhallowes the lesser.
68. S. Laurence Poultnay.
69. S. Mich by Crooked lane
70. S. Magnus.
71. S. Margaret.
72. S. Leonard.
73. S. Bennet.
74. S. Dennis.
75. S. Margaret Pattico.
76. S. Andrew Hubart.
77. S. Georges.
78. S. Bottolphs.
79. S. Mary hill.
80. S. Dunston East.
81. Allhallowes Barking.
82. S. Olaves.
83. Allhallowes Fanch St
84. S. Catharin Colectans.
85. S. Cath. Creed Church.
86. S. Andrew Undershaft.
87. S. Hellins.
88. Ethelborough.
89. Allhallowes in the Wall
90. S. Bottolphs Bush gate
91. S. Bottolphs Aldgate.
92. S. Brides.
93. Temple Church.
94. S. Dunstons West
95. S. Andrew in Holborne.
96. S. Pulchers.
97. S. Bartholomew great.
98. S. Bartholomew the lesser
99. S. Bottolphs by Aldersgate
100. S. Giles by Cripplegate.
- A. Ludgate.
- B. Newgate.
- C. Aldersgate
- D. Cripplegate.
- E. Mooregate
- F. Bishopsgate.
- G. Aldgate
- H. Essexhouse.
- I. the Temple
- K. Dorset house.
- L. Bridewell.
- M. Baynards Castle.
- N. Christ Ch. Lloyst
- O. Hosp S. Barth.
- P. Charterhouse.
- Q. Guildhall.
- R. the Stokes.
- S. Royal, Exchange
- T. Gresham Colledge.
- V. Leadenhall.
- W. Dukes Palace.
- X. Custome house.
- Y. Bedlam
- Z. Sion Colledge.
- a. Temple Staires
- b. White Horse Staires.
- c. Black Fryars Staires.
- d. Puddle dock.
- e. Pauls wharfe.
- f. Broken wharfe.
- g. Queens Wythe.
- h. 3 Cranes
- i. Stil ard
- k. Coldharbour.
- l. Old Swan.
- m. Belins gate
- n. Tower wharfe
- o. Artillery Yard.

The baker's shop had ignited at one o'clock on the morning of the 2nd September.* By the next night all Gracechurch Street was burned, and the flames spread along the river's side to the Vintry. On Tuesday, the 3rd, the whole of Fleet Street as far as the Temple was on fire, but the more substantial brick buildings in that quarter checked its further progress. The king himself, and his brother the duke of York, exerted their influence in blowing up and pulling down houses to stop the course of the conflagration, and succeeded so well, that it is easy to see that similar activity earlier applied might have saved the city. But Bludworth, who had succeeded Lawrence as lord mayor, though he did not spare himself, had no power of organisation. At first he under-estimated the greatness of the danger, and replied by a coarse joke to those who urged the application of stronger methods of repression. Next he despaired and wrung his hands in hopeless fatuity. By the help of soldiers, however, and others, and by the personal exertions of the duke and his courtiers, gunpowder was freely used at Temple Bar, at Pye Corner near the entrance of Smithfield, and at various other salient points to the north and east of the central fire. On Thursday evening it was brought under control, and though it burst out again in one or two places it was speedily subdued, and by Friday at mid-day the great danger was over, and people had time to judge of the dimensions of the disaster.

The prospect was terrible enough to paralyse a stouter heart than that of the unhappy mayor. The result of the five days' fire was, summarily, as follows :—396 acres of houses were destroyed, comprising fifteen wards

* The official account, from the *London Gazette* of the 10th September, is reprinted by Allen, i. 401.

wholly ruined, eight others half burnt; 400 streets, 13,200 dwellings, 89 churches, besides chapels, and 4 of the city gates. The cathedral of St. Paul, the Exchange, Custom House, portion of the Guildhall, and most of the halls of city companies, with a host of other stately edifices of all sorts, were consumed. The extent of the ruin is absolutely unparalleled. The earthquake of Lisbon, in that London was so much greater, was as nothing in comparison. The loss of life, as ascertained, was moderate, but the loss of property could hardly be estimated. It has sometimes been reckoned at between three and four millions sterling, but this is irrespective of the destruction of inestimable things, such as monuments, libraries, records, and objects of personal value. London, in short, as a city, was obliterated from the map.

The burning of St. Paul's alone would have been considered an irreparable misfortune at any other time. True the steeple, once the highest in Europe, had already, as long before as 1561, been shortened, if not actually destroyed, by lightning: but now the long Norman nave, the light and elegant choir, the chapels, the church of St. Faith-under-St. Paul's, the cloisters, the venerable chapter-house, the bishop's palace, the deanery and the canons' houses, all were reduced to a mass of smoking ruins.* The crypt had been filled, as a place

* In a curious poem, 'The Conflagration of London,' attributed by Lowndes to Simon Ford, D.D. of Oxford (lent to me by Messrs. Ellis and White of Bond Street), the burning of St. Paul's is described in forcible if grotesque couplets:—

“That reverend Fabrick which the World admir'd
 Amongst a crowd of lesser note, is fir'd.
 Its cloud surmounting steeple flam'd so high
 That threatned Heavens ne're fear'd a flame so nigh.
 Yea, some beholders thought 'twas more then fear'd
 While falling sparks like falling Stars appear'd.”

of safety, with sheets of unbound, and in some cases unpublished, books, and four days after the flames had been first overcome, on the opening of the doors, the rush of air fanned the smouldering paper into a fresh fire, which could not be extinguished, and which consummated the ruin of the very foundations of the great edifice above.

The beautiful church of the Grey Friars, to which I have so often had occasion to refer, shared the same fate, as did the chapel of St. Thomas in Cheap,—the Mercers' chapel, as it was then called,—and, of course, all the minor parochial churches as far east as St. Michael's and St. Peter's in Cornhill, and as far west as St. Bride's in Fleet Street. St. Sepulchre's was only partially burnt. St. Bartholomew's, or what was left of it from the rough usage of the previous century, was saved, as were the inner buildings of the Grey Friars, now the Blue Coat School, and All Hallows, Barking, though the flames approached close to it. The churches on the north side of Leadenhall Street were also preserved. These exceptions include, of course, all that lay further north, St. Helen's, St. Ethelburga's, with Crosby Hall and Gresham College, in Bishopsgate, but everything else was utterly consumed, and for most of the old city we have only the descriptions left us by the indefatigable Stow to tell how great is our loss in sumptuous churches, chapels, tombs and tablets, the memorials of long ages of faith and devotion of artistic skill and venerable association.

CHAPTER XII.

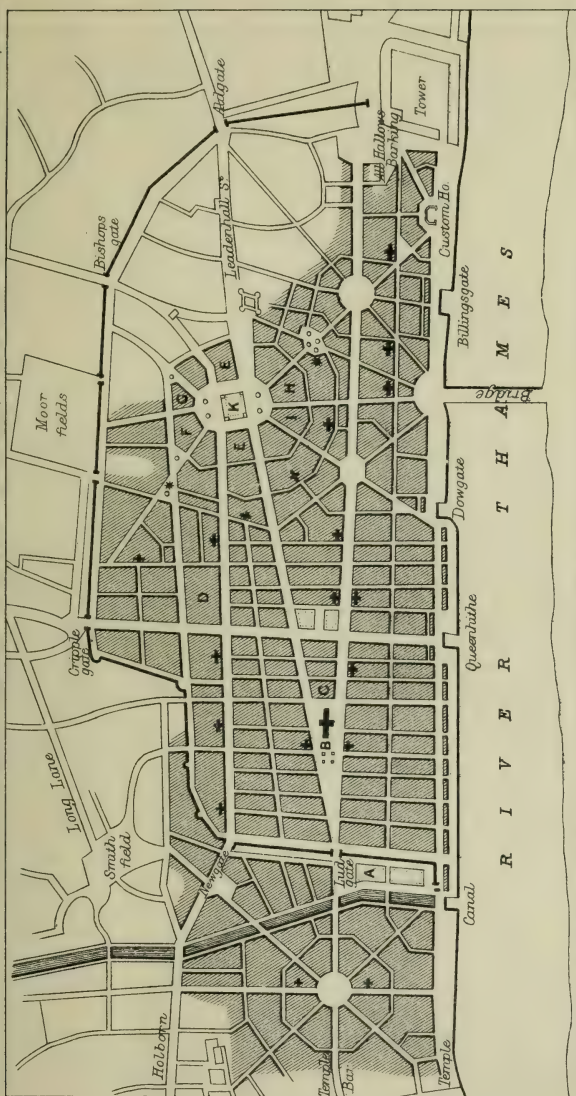
WREN.

IT is but seldom in the history of the world that great men and great opportunities meet. Too often genius has to struggle with circumstances. Inigo Jones's fate as an architect may well be contrasted with that of Wren. He had to contend against prejudice, national poverty, and finally, the confusion which was caused by the great rebellion. His finest designs were never carried out. His noble portico at St. Paul's was finished just before war was declared. He fell, indeed, on evil days, and though at once the most learned and the most original of English architects, the accident that he lived in times of social disturbance has deprived us of any very great building from his designs. He was a man of genius without an opportunity.*

Personally, too, he seems to have been unpopular. He was much disliked by the parishioners of St. Gregory's for instance. They petitioned Parliament against him for pulling down half their church to make room for the new portico.† And others looked askance at him as an instrument of the royal extravagance. His

* Mr. Fergusson, 'History of Modern Architecture,' p. 265, somewhat oddly remarks that "the troubles of the Commonwealth supervened before his career was half over." But Jones was seventy years of age when the portico of St. Paul's was finished, and he was eighty when he died in 1652. Does Mr. Fergusson suppose the average length of an architect's career is 140 years?

† Fourth Report 'Historical MSS. Commission,' p. 89.



The Shaded part shows the extent of the fire. — * Churches. — A Wood Market. — B St Pauls. — C Doctors Commons, D Guildhall. — E Goldsmiths. — F Post Office. — G Exchange. — H Mint. — I Insurance. — K Exchange.

London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

Stanford's Geog. Estab.

design for a palace at Whitehall is still extant* and is well known to architects and others. But no part of it ever existed except on paper. The Royal Chapel at Whitehall is, perhaps, the most considerable of his buildings now remaining, and though it has been diverted from its original purpose as a banqueting hall, and much altered and "restored," it is one of the most complete, satisfactory, and at the same time picturesque edifices in Europe. His only remarkable church, if, indeed, he ever designed another, is St. Paul's, Covent Garden.† Here, again, the fates were against him. It is evident at a glance that the great question for the architect's solution, was the simple and common one—namely, how to obtain the greatest effect at the least cost. In his portico at St. Paul's Cathedral‡ he was less hampered by want of means. It must indeed have been a noble work, worthy of the situation, and in some sense worthy of the church to which it was attached. The worst part of the new work was the pair of western towers, but he may have hoped to improve them as time went on. The incongruity of the design with a gothic cathedral has been much insisted upon. But there was probably very little real incongruity between the Norman features of the west front, and the Corin-

* It was published by Kent in 1727. No part of the Banqueting House was in the original design; and it is doubtful whether it forms part of the latter one, which may be found in '*Vitruvius Britannicus*,' ii. 4. There are separate plates of the Banqueting House, now Whitehall Chapel, in vol. i. 12, 13.

† Figured in '*Vitruvius Britannicus*.'

‡ See Longman's '*Three Cathedrals*,' p. 68, and the '*Hand-book to St. Paul's*,' p. 28. I understand that a number of Inigo Jones's designs are in the library of Devonshire House. They probably came through Kent's hands to lord Burlington. It would be interesting to know if any view of his restoration of St. Alban's, Wood Street, is among them. The portico of St. Paul's was 40 ft. high, 50 ft. deep, and 200 ft. wide. The columns must therefore have been of about the same size as those of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, but the depth and width of the portico were much greater.

thian columns of the portico, not more, certainly, than already existed between the round arched and the pointed work in the church itself. Moreover, incongruity, where both the old work and the new were of the best, would rather deserve the name of picturesqueness, and we may feel sure that no work of Inigo Jones ever wanted in this characteristic. We cannot mistake his touch when we meet with any fragment of one of his designs. In fact, if Wren when he was employed at Westminster, as Jones had been employed at St. Paul's, had built a similar portico, or had set a Grecian temple on the summit of his towers, it might have looked incongruous, but it would at any rate have been more picturesque than the perfectly congruous but uninteresting, if not ugly design after which the west end was ultimately finished by Hawksmoor.* It is no disparagement of Wren to say that Jones had qualities which he wanted, and that Jones more often struck the exact mean between severity and irregularity which produces the best effects in architecture.

It is a question whether, if the great opportunity afforded to Wren had come to Jones instead, he could have made a better use of it. The very regularity of Wren's habits, his methodical way of going to work, his exactness and mathematical precision, are qualities seldom united with such high creative power. There is no guess-work in anything he did. He tried no experiments. Everything was thoroughly thought out. He knew beforehand what effect he wished to produce, and how to produce it. Yet, as is so often the case with genius like his, his powers improved with years, and the last design or modification was better than

* These western towers are usually attributed to Wren, but Miss Phillimore and other recent authorities assign them to Hawksmoor.

the first. Of no great artist was it ever more true than of Wren, that his genius was a capacity for taking pains.*

Christopher Wren, the son of the dean of Windsor, the nephew of the bishop of Ely, was connected by birth with the royalist party. His uncle was a prisoner in the Tower during the whole time of Cromwell's ascendancy,† but he contrived, without however any inconsistency, to stand on good terms with the Protector's government, owing to his friendship with Claypoole. He had no inclination to meddle in politics, and was not implicated with the losing side at the Restoration.‡

When Inigo Jones, before hostilities broke out between King and Parliament, added the portico to the western front of St. Paul's, he also greatly altered the ancient building in other parts. The Puritans, who saw in the cathedral a useless building too large to preach in, not only stopped the repairs, but considerably injured the whole church, and especially the new portico, in which they permitted booths to be built. After the restoration of the Stuarts even the new work was falling to pieces. The epitaph of a dean who died four years after Charles came home is significant. "Among these sacred ruins

* Many of Wren's drawings are preserved in the Library of All Souls' College. They are briefly described by Mr. Arthur Ashpitel in the 'Transactions of the Lon. and Midd. Arch. Soc.,' iii. 39.

† See vol. ii. for a further account of bishop Wren and his contest with the Hattons about Ely Place. The authorities for Wren's life and work which I have chiefly consulted are Miss Phillimore's 'Sir Christopher Wren,' Mr. A. T. Taylor's 'Towers and Steeples,' and two articles by Mr. Basil Champneys in the 'Magazine of Art' for 1882.

‡ Miss Phillimore, whose own prepossessions come out strongly in the book on Wren, would make Sir Christopher much more of a partisan than history shows him. He did not in any way betray what would now be called "ritualistic" views in the planning and adorning of churches.

his own are laid, in the certainty that both shall rise again." Wren was now employed in the office of Denham, the surveyor-general of works, and had already shown his capacity by a college chapel at Cambridge.* He was consulted about the repairs, and reported that the whole building was in a dangerous state. The tower leaned. The pillars of the nave were mere shells, filled with rubble. The roof was too heavy for its supports. He recommended what would practically amount to rebuilding the cathedral. A dome was to be the central feature, and the rest of the church was gradually to be brought into harmony with it. Wren's idea of patching up an ancient gothic and Norman building, and of gradually bringing the whole into one harmonious design, has merits for which he has hardly yet received due credit. We might possibly, had he carried out the design, have had a new development of architectural art, growing more directly out of gothic, than the classical, or Italian style afterwards followed, and might have seen in any later works undertaken by the same hand, a further and yet further advance. Wren is known to have admired Ely Cathedral—the plan of which, indeed, he copied in his new St. Paul's—and the chapel of King's College, with its "fan-work" roof. The idea of a dome also fascinated him: though it is a curious fact, that he can never, till he built his own, have seen one of any size. The dome of St. Sophia set a pattern all through the East. Every one of the exquisite mosques of Cairo is descended from this most successful Byzantine development of a classical style. What similar feeling might have become in Wren's hands

* Pembroke Chapel, "restored" away by Mr. G. Scott. Such an interesting building should have been spared, but Pembroke College suffered worse things than this a little earlier.

we know not. He never mastered the simpler principles of gothic architecture, and it is possible that even the task of repairing Old St. Paul's might have only awakened in his mind a disgust at the whole style, in which he saw so much bad work, so much ignorance of the principles of building, so much weakness.* St. Paul's, like St. Alban's Abbey in our own time, was chiefly remarkable for size. There was little or no uniformity. The lofty spire, the tallest in Christendom,† had been set on fire by lightning in 1444, but the flames were quenched, as tradition reports, with vinegar, and the spire rebuilt,‡ only to be wholly consumed from the same cause in 1561, when no attempt was made to repair the damage. A wooden spire, 520 feet in height, unprotected by either lightning conductors or the neighbourhood of any buildings of similar elevation, was sure to be struck sooner or later. It had two towers at the west end, which Inigo Jones altered to suit the character of his portico. The nave was Norman, consisting of twelve bays, and had been originally roofed with flat timbers. Some time, perhaps in the fifteenth century, it had been vaulted. The tower had great windows showing light into the crossing of the transepts. The east end was terminated by a lofty Lady Chapel, with a large rose window of remarkable beauty. The clerestory of the nave was Early English, but the transepts and choir were Decorated.§ The monuments

* Wren, in his contempt for gothic, was justified by many things which the fire revealed. It has been so much the habit, for perhaps thirty years past, to praise the conscientiousness of mediæval workmen, that I was long in coming at the reasons of Wren's aversion to gothic.

† See above, chapter vii.

‡ In 1462.

§ See Mr. Ferry's beautiful elevations in the 'Three Cathedrals.' The spire had four corner pinnacles, as appears from Van Wyngaerde's view, and from a small illumination engraved in Canon Stubbs's edition of 'Annales Paulini' in the Rolls Series, p. 277.

were numerous. A few fragments only remain, now shown in the crypt of the new church. Among the great folk buried in St. Paul's were St. Erkenwald,* king Ethelred, the "Unready," or "Without Council," John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster; Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Sir Christopher Hatton, four worthies of the great Elizabeth period; Chigwell, Pulteney, Hewit, and probably many other mayors; more than twelve bishops of London, and a number of deans, including Colet, Nowell and Donne.†

Such was Old St. Paul's, the finest church in London. The newly named Christ Church in Newgate Street was considered in its time more elegant, but it was much smaller, and the choir was remodelled at the Reformation.‡ Of the other churches we can only judge from those which survived the fire. The number of them has been considerably diminished even since the time of Wren. Some have been destroyed and rebuilt. Some have been destroyed and never rebuilt, like the Guildhall Chapel. Some, like St. Martin Outwich, have been destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again. Of those that remain, St. Helen's is the most important, St. Ethelburga's the oldest, and St. Katherine Cree the newest, having been practically rebuilt in 1630. St. Olave's,

* See above, chapter iii.

† Donne's effigy, in a shroud, is the most perfect of the old monuments now surviving. It stands in the south aisle of the choir. I have mentioned the preservation of Bishop Braybrooke's body in chapter viii.

‡ See 'London's Remains,' by Simon Ford D.D 1667. Mr. Ellis favoured me with the loan of this rare tract. Christ Church is thus compared to St. Paul's:—

“This church next to Paul's was famed; Paul's the more wide;
But this with it for neatness vi'd.”

Hart Street, and St. Andrew's Undershaft also survive, with All Hallows Barking.*

The history of an old city church cannot be better illustrated than by the fate of St. Martin Outwich.† It underwent every vicissitude except the Great Fire. The parish, like several others within the city boundaries, is situated in two different wards. It probably, therefore, represents the estate, or we may, perhaps, say *soke*, of the Outwich family. The name occurs as early as 1291, as St. Martin Otteswich. In 1302 it is Otheswyke. The name may denote a "*wych*" or dwelling, within Bishopgate, or may belong to some Otto or Otho whose memory has not otherwise been preserved. Stow mentions four members of the "*Oteswich*" family, and calls them the founders. The advowson was in the hands of John, Earl of Warren and Surrey, in 1347. It appears to have belonged to the Crown after this for a time. But a certain citizen named Churchman, who was sheriff in 1385, and who was trustee of some descendants of the Outwich family, bought the estate and advowson for them. In 1404 we find him joining with them to sell both to the merchant taylor's or linen armourers' company, "Keepers of the Guild and Fra-

* The following is a list of the gothic churches and chapels in London and the suburbs older than the Fire:—All Hallows; St. Andrew's Undershaft; the tower of St. Andrew, Holborn; St. Bartholomew the Great; part of St. Bartholomew the Less; St. Etheldreda's, Ely Place; St. Ethelburga's; St. Giles, Cripplegate; St. Helen; St. John, Savoy; St. Katherine Cree; St. Margaret, Westminster; St. Olave, Hart Street; St. Pancras Old Church; St. Peter's Abbey Church, Westminster; St. Peter in the Tower; St. Saviour, Southwark; Stepney Church; Austin Friars, now a Dutch Church; and the crypts of St. John, Clerkenwell, and St. Stephen, Westminster.

† The old church was described and illustrated in a large quarto volume by Wilkinson, in 1797.

ternity of John the Baptist,"* and the company has ever since presented to the living. The Great Fire, as I have said, spared the church, which was situated at the extremity of Threadneedle Street, with its east window looking on Bishopsgate Street. It thus closely adjoined Gresham House, and almost faced Crosby Place.

From its conspicuous situation and from the wealth of its patrons the merchant taylors, we might perhaps expect that St. Martin Outwich would have resembled a great country church, or one in a wealthy commercial town like Hull or Boston. But it was only 66 feet long. The wooden roof rose but 31 feet from the floor. The walls were a mixture of brick and stone. The windows were small, and the tower was only 65 feet high to the vane. It did not even rank, therefore, with a second or third rate village church, and contained, besides a few handsome altar-tombs, no features of architectural importance. The two miserable aisles were divided by a couple of pillars of "a Gothic-Tuscan order," and the chancel was panelled to a height of 11 feet. Such was the old church. In 1797, it became so ruinous that it was pulled down and a new building erected, of which it was remarked that it looked more like a gaol than a church. Cockerell was the architect and his object in disfiguring this very conspicuous corner with so "heavy and ugly"† a design never transpired. Within it was a little less hideous, being oval in shape, and not inconvenient for public worship. On its removal in 1877, the parish was united with that of St. Helen and the bones of the unhonoured dead were dug up and

* The history of this guild, could it be recovered, might throw light on many difficult and disputed points. Was St. John a special patron of the weavers? Or was the guild founded after the incorporation of the company?

† Godwin and Britton, 'Churches of London,' ii. 124.

carted off to Ilford. Some of the monuments may be seen in St. Helen's Church,* and form an interesting addition to the number already collected there.

It is certain that the majority of the parish churches of London were not unlike St. Martin's when the fire came. Some of them, we know, were perched on arches.† St. Mary Colechurch and St. Lawrence Pountney were examples of this arrangement, while St. Mildred's in the Poultry was built in part on a bridge over the Wallbrook.‡

The condition of the city when Wren undertook its reconstruction may be gathered from the summary in the last chapter. But he was not content with the idea of merely rebuilding such churches as those of which I have spoken, nor was he willing to see the narrow, winding, unwholesome streets renewed on their old lines. He prepared a magnificent plan, by which St. Paul's and the Exchange would respectively become the centres of a double system of radiating streets, designed to set off the principal public buildings to the best advantage, while a broad quay lined the river's bank. The cathedral was to be surrounded by a colonnaded piazza, and every street corner was to afford some such vista as that which still surprises and delights the eye when we pass Greenwich Hospital. The western

* I have given some account of St. Helen's in my 'In and Out of London.' See also above, chap. x.

† There is a church at Bristol in a similar position, and one at Winchester, and a portion of one of the churches at Warwick is over a gate.

‡ 'Church of St. Mildred' by Thomas Milbourne, p. 5. It was rebuilt about 1456: "John Saxton, then rector, gave 32*l.* towards the cost of the new choir, which is described as standing 'upon the course of Walbrook.'" I may refer here to an article by Mr. Freshfield on St. Margaret's Lothbury, St. Christopher le Stocks, and St. Bartholomew's by the Bank, 'Archæologia,' xiv. 57; and several papers on old city churches in the 'Transactions' of the Lond. and Midd. Arch. Soc.

end was to have looked down Ludgate Hill from a "circular pavilion 60 feet in diameter."* The smaller streets were to be not less than 30 feet wide, and all dark alleys and courts were to be abolished. The churches were to occupy commanding situations along the chief thoroughfares, and were to be "designed according to the best forms for capacity and hearing, adorned with useful porticoes, and lofty ornamental towers and steeples in the greater parishes." The churchyards were to be in the ancient Roman fashion, a sort of girdle round the town, carefully planted and laid out, and calculated both to ornament the city and also to check its growth.† No gardens were to be within the walls, the wide streets and numerous open spaces being, in Wren's opinion, sufficient for the healthiness of the citizens. The Fleet was to be left open, to be widened, canalised, and bordered by broad quays, so as to form a convenient port for barges.‡

Had Wren been allowed to carry out this magnificent design, which would not, by the way, have cost any more than the actual rebuilding as it eventually took place, no city in Europe would have had a more magnificent, or a more picturesque aspect. It was not a mere architectural day-dream. "Wren, with a perfect knowledge of his own powers, which he considered as dispassionately, and knew as accurately as any matter of mathematical science, was ready to undertake and perform his scheme to the uttermost."§ But several circumstances conspired to defeat

* See paper in the 'Transactions,' iii. 39, by Mr. Ashpitel.

† Miss Phillimore, p. 173.

‡ London has been Haussmannised in the past few years to an immense extent, but Wren's lines have not been followed, and, indeed, the design adopted has been varied from time to time, so that the result, though some streets are widened, will not, in the end, do much to improve the appearance of the city.

§ Miss Phillimore, p. 174.

it. The king could never make up his mind, and at this time the king counted for more than at an earlier period, while the mayor was not a man like Whittington or Gresham. The citizens were in a great hurry to begin the rebuilding. Leases were granted immediately in Moorfields. Men of business were anxious not to part with the old sites. The winter was coming on, and the people must be housed. In short, there was no one to take the scheme up warmly, and there were a great many to oppose it. The modern archæologist, who knows how instructive are those very courts and alleys which Wren would have obliterated, who traces with diligent minuteness the old parochial boundaries, and tries to reconstruct for himself the gabled houses, the quaint little churches at every corner, the conduits and even the sign-boards which still survive in street names, would have had most cause for regret.

It is, of course, impossible to go completely through even the shortest notice of all that Wren built within the next few years.* No two towers, no two churches, no two porticoes were the same. The infinite variety of his designs is almost as surprising as their uniform beauty. St. Paul's grew slowly, while the parish churches all around were springing up with amazing rapidity. For the most part very little money was forthcoming, and Wren had constantly to postpone every other consideration to that of cost. But the cheapest of the new churches was at least well built, and likely to last without any important repairs,† clean, light, airy, and designed as Wren had promised, "according to the best

* An approximate list of his city buildings is in Appendix D. Miss Phillimore's is very erroneous, and carelessly printed besides.

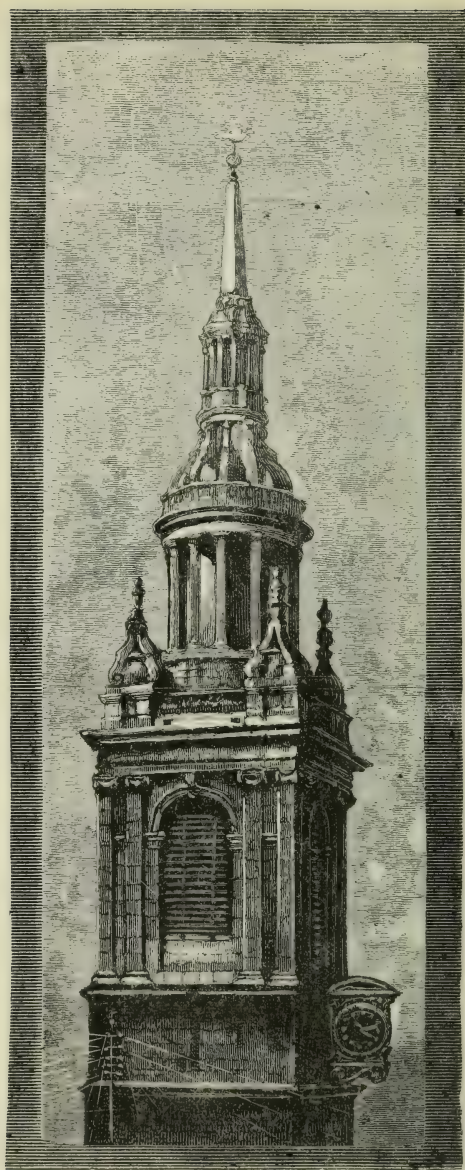
† "Building," he says in a letter quoted by Miss Phillimore (p. 150), "certainly ought to have the attribute of Eternal."

forms for capacity and hearing." The old idea of a church was one in which there would be the best accommodation for the celebration of the Mass. The "capacity" to be studied was not a capacity for holding a large congregation, but for providing as many altars as possible for the chantry priests. The new idea elevated the sermon to the first place in the minds of religious citizens. It is probable that many of the older churches were without pulpits of any kind. In the new ones the pulpit was the prominent if not the principal feature. In another point all the new churches differed from the old. Wren did not put up a single open timber roof like those which prevailed in a large majority of the old churches. Some he vaulted, some he ceiled, but knowing the danger from storm and fire of the high pitched roofs with their open beams, he covered his churches for the most part with lead, and laid it as nearly as possible flat. When he got leave, he took great pains with the exterior, and sometimes, when one part of a church was more exposed to view than another, he accentuated the ornamental and constructional features. The eastern end of St. Lawrence Jewry looks on King Street and the Guildhall Court. It is enriched with an exquisitely proportioned composition of Corinthian columns and pilasters.* At St. Matthew's Friday Street,† again, where only one side faced a street, and light was needed, the whole wall forms a single long window divided by pillars into six arched openings.

But the great glory of Wren's parish churches, and indeed of the whole city, are the towers and spires. They are gradually disappearing, to the great regret of

* The superiority of Wren as an artist comes out strongly when we compare the east end of St. Lawrence with the very similar one at St. Botolph Aldersgate, by Pierson.

† Now condemned or destroyed.



BOW STEEPLE.

To face p. 375, Vol. I.

all lovers of the beautiful in architecture. When two or three had been pulled down it was discovered, but too late, that the harmonious effect of all was marred. There can be no doubt that Wren made the design of one to balance or contrast or harmonise with another. No tower was built with reference to itself alone. All were part of a single great composition, now for ever lost. I am inclined the more to insist upon this because I have never heard any kind of reason given why they should have been removed. It is sometimes said that the site was valuable. But the site of a church tower is very small, and surely London is not so poverty-stricken that it cannot afford to keep its greatest ornaments. The case of the church itself is somewhat different. In the first place, it covers a more considerable area, and that, too, in many parts of the city where land is sold by the inch almost, so valuable is it. In the second, some persons of influence, though they did not scruple to allow the church to be utterly razed, had very considerable objection to its being put to a secular use.* The value of the site and of the materials was applied to a most desirable object, but how that object can be served by the destruction of buildings admirably suited for some business purposes, I have not learned. Wren seems to have foreseen the probability of this course of action, and both to have put his towers apart from the churches to which they belonged, and also to have avoided, where it was possible, setting them in the principal street front. The steeple of St. Mary-le-Bow in Cheapside is an unfortunate exception. Here he built a passage to connect it with

* In India a man will torture and illtreat his cow in the most shocking manner, and then kneel down and worship her. A somewhat similar superstition seems to have prevailed in the minds of the worthy people—I do not in the least know who they are—who have managed this business.

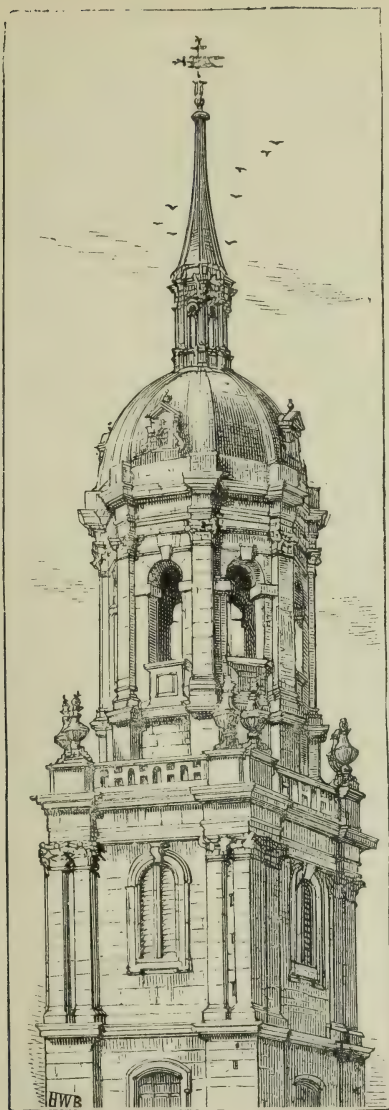
the church, setting the tower forward into the street. It has not yet been pulled down to widen the roadway, like the best of the spires.

Wren's towers have been divided into three classes.* Some are wholly of stone. Some consist of stone sub-structures with lead-covered spires or lanterns. Some are simple towers. It is difficult to preserve this classification, as it does not in any way define the relative importance of the different designs. The western towers of St. Paul's, for instance, are in the first, and the central dome in the second class. But for practical purposes, and as we have no occasion to go minutely through every one of them, it may do as well as any other.†

The stone steeples are eleven in number, including the two western towers of St. Paul's. Wren's most ambitious work is to be found in them. They were only attached to churches when sufficient money was forthcoming and the architect was not too much hampered by questions of cost. The palm among them is usually assigned to St. Mary-le-Bow: and I shall probably be considered very heterodox if I venture to prefer St. Magnus. There are some most charming features in St. Mary's, the light circular colonnade, for instance. But the square and the circular parts do not seem to come well together, and I have never been able to see any meaning or use in the corner finials of the square or lower part of the tower supporting little vases. They certainly have no beauty. Vases alone are used in the same situation on the lovely steeple of St. Bride, as well as on the tower of St. Magnus, which indeed remains, in my mind, one of the most absolutely faultless of Wren's towers, though I should

* Taylor, p. 10.

† In Knight's 'London,' v. 180, Wren's churches are divided into "domed, basilical, and miscellaneous," which is in reality no division at all, as most of them come under the last head, which has to be subdivided.



ST. MAGNUS.

To face p. 376, Vol. I.

have preferred stone for lead on the dome at the top. Lead, however, is no necessary part of the design.* St. Mary's is much larger, the dragon vane on the top of the highest pinnacle rising to a height of 221 feet 9 inches from the pavement of Cheapside, while St. Magnus is only 185 feet high, and looks even smaller, as it is close under London Bridge. St. Mary's was begun in 1671, and is therefore among the first, as St. Magnus, erected in 1705, is one of the last of Wren's designs.

One cannot but admire the steeple of St. Bride's, built in 1680, although the series of similar stages which form the spire would have been displeasing if executed by any other hand. As it is, we find it difficult "to avoid the idea that they might all sink into one another, and shut up like the slides of a telescope."† Another ambitious, yet scarcely successful design, is that of St. Vedast, Foster Lane. It is seen, when we enter the city by Newgate Street, behind the steeple of Christ Church, and the two are exactly the same in height.‡ As the steeple of St. Mary-le-Bow can be taken into the same view from the street, it will be seen at once that Wren thought more of St. Mary's than of the others, and that to a certain extent, they were erected to set it off. Of the two, St. Vedast's was the first built.§ Its unquiet play of concave curves comes into absolute and violent contrast with the concentric circles of St. Mary's, and it is easy to believe that Wren saw the advantage of trying in Christ Church the effect of simple right angles and as few curves as were consistent with an arcuated building.

* Mr. Champneys recognises in the lantern a reminiscence of what Wren had seen in Blickling and other Jacobean buildings.

† Fergusson, p. 276.

‡ 160 feet; roughly speaking, two-thirds the height of St. Mary-le-Bow.

§ 1697.

Undoubtedly when the authorities remove one of the three, both the others will suffer.

Wren, little as he cared for gothic, has left in the city four examples of what he could do in that style. St. Alban's Wood Street, is hardly to be distinguished from a genuine gothic church of a late period. Inigo Jones had built a church on the same spot, and it is stated by tradition to have been in the same style. As Wren's work was finished in 1685, it is among the designs of a comparatively early period in his career. Thirteen years later he built the tower only of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, the church not having been burnt. Here he imitated the design of St. Nicholas, at Newcastle-on-Tyne,* perching a small spire or lantern on four flying buttresses. Though really a strong building, it looks weak, and we cannot admire architectural gymnastics. Thirteen years again elapsed, and Wren rebuilt St. Mary Aldermary, a church only partially consumed in the great fire. The groined roof is very fine, and shows what might have been done for the further development of the old style had Wren and his successors taken it up in earnest. The mouldings are too shallow, the tracery and panelling too round, the details semi-classical ; but St. Mary's will always take rank after the famous staircase at Christ Church, Oxford, as an example of post-mediæval gothic.† The tower, the effect of which has been greatly injured, when seen from a little distance, by the removal of Wren's greatest spire, which stood close by in Watling Street, is graceful, and but for a too

* St. Nicholas is familiar to all lovers of Bewick's woodcuts. Two examples of this not very meritorious design are in Scotland.

† I find, oddly enough, no mention of St. Mary's in Miss Phillimore's book. Perhaps she considers the church merely a restoration. There is evidence, I believe, by the way, that the staircase at Oxford is much older than the date, 1640, usually assigned to it (see Ingram's 'Oxford,' i. 51).

frequent repetition of small and meaningless architectural features, very successful as an imitation. St. Antholin's stood alone as the only simple stone spire Wren built. It contrasted admirably with St. Mary Aldermary, being purely gothic in construction though with Italian details. It was taller than St. Mary's by about twenty feet, as a spire should be, but the proportion between them was otherwise very equal. It was pulled down in 1875. "One cannot but deeply regret the loss of this spire, unique in its way among Wren's works," observes Mr. Taylor, and his words are not by any means strong enough to suit the occasion. We cannot boast much of the culture with which the last quarter of the nineteenth century was inaugurated in the city, when such a vandalism as this was perpetrated. We may recall the words of Strype when speaking of the destruction of the spire of the Austin Friars, "times hereafter may more talk on it."

Wren's latest architectural effort was the rebuilding of the tower of St. Michael's upon Cornhill, which was only accomplished the year before his death. He had built the church more than forty years before, but the fire, though it had injured, had not destroyed the tower. We have thus in the same building a gothic steeple and a classical church, and the steeple can only be looked upon as a restoration or imitation of the old one. Indeed the parishioners seem, as became the dwellers on the old bishop's soke, to have been unusually conservative in their ideas, and their church covers the exact site of the former one, though it is not rectangular. The tower, one of the most conspicuous in London, as it rises 130 feet from the highest ground in the city, is square, and has at the summit four massive turrets rather than pinnacles, in a very fair gothic style. This

is more than can be said for a vulgar porch, bedizened with coarse carving and coloured columns, which has lately been added to the original design.

Of Wren's minor churches it is not necessary that I should say much. Many of them were built in great haste, others with very insufficient means. Thus, the people of Allhallows Lombard Street had a temporary structure erected to worship in, and would have restored their old church had it been possible. They coped the walls with straw and lime to keep them from further destruction. By 1670 they reluctantly abandoned hopes of repair, and commissioned Wren to build them a new church. To expedite the building in some parishes, presents were sent to Wren and to his master mason, Hooke, and rewards for rapid work. It is astonishing how solidly and soundly they are all constructed. If ever an architect built for eternity it was Wren. We are sometimes told that it is necessary when the churches are abandoned to pull the towers down on account of the expense of keeping them in repair. But those towers which have been pulled down showed no signs of decay, and would have stood for centuries, and all the longer for not being subject to the tinkering of a modern builder. The excuse only adds insult to injury.

The smallness of the cost of Wren's works is to be observed. Though he built so solidly, and though he took care that no part of the panelling or carving was scamped, yet the most expensive of all his parish churches, St. Mary-le-Bow, only reached 15,400*l*. As money was worth seven to ten per cent. at the time, we may reckon this less than 50,000*l*. in our money. Christ Church Newgate Street, and St. Lawrence Jewry, cost 12,000*l*. each, as did St. Bride's. But a great number were

built for an expenditure varying from 2500*l.* at St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, to 6000*l.* at St. Peter's Cornhill. Sir Christopher himself drew the modest salary of 100*l.* a year as architect to the City Church Commissioners. The difficulty of raising money was often very great, and some of the poorer parishes found it almost impossible. In fact, when we remember that there were no insurance companies, that an enormous amount of wealth was destroyed, that a large number of wealthy people were utterly ruined, and that little business had been done the year before the Great Fire owing to the plague, we are surprised at the rapidity with which London rose from her ashes. Private benevolence was very frequently enlisted. A tax on coals was imposed by Act of Parliament. Collections were made from house to house. Yet it was only by two parishes combining their funds that several of the churches were built.* The gifts of private individuals were in some cases out of all proportion to what we hear of nowadays. The widow of Henry Rogers, for instance, gave 5000*l.* to the repair of St. Mary Aldermary, a sum equal to fully 12,000*l.* now. So, too, Lady Williamson not only gave 2620*l.* towards the building of St. Paul's, being the largest individual subscription, but 4000*l.* towards St. Dunstan's-in-the-East and 2000*l.* towards St. Mary-le-Bow. "Mr. George Holman, said to have been a Roman Catholic, gave 1000*l.*"† to the building of St. Benet Fink. Sums of 250*l.* and 100*l.* were very common, and the citizens of the time set us a good example. The unanimity with which Wren was employed is also a pleasing feature in

* The number of churches burnt was about 86. The number rebuilt about 50.

† Godwin and Britton, ii. 194.

the annals of the period. Nor was his attention confined to churches. He built also a number of halls for the companies, but here he had the sharp competition of the city architect, Jarman, who in fact restored the greatest of them. But Guildhall was little injured by the Great Fire, and what Jarman did was neither considerable nor admirable. Wren, in short, must be looked upon as the restorer of the London we now see, and one hesitates to write that already eleven of his churches and ten of his towers have been pulled down in what I may call cold blood—as part of a settled and premeditated scheme which still carries on its evil work.*

I have reserved to the last the two most important of his buildings in the city. One is among the smallest, the other by far the largest of his churches, but their history is inextricably connected. Wren had already, early in 1672, built a small domed church. St. Mary-at-Hill had not lost its ancient tower, which stood till 1780, but Wren renewed the body of the church. Four Doric columns support a cupola, which only rises to a height of 38 feet. He formed a more ambitious design towards the end of the same year. In October the foundations were laid of the outwardly plain church of St. Stephen's Wallbrook. Whether Wren ever made a suitable design for the exterior or not I have no informa-

* The churches destroyed were All Hallows Bread Street,—what does Miss Phillimore mean (p. 252) by saying that Newton was buried here?—St. Antholin Watling Street; St. Bartholomew by the Bank; St. Bennet Gracechurch; St. Bennet Fink; St. Christopher le Stocks; St. Dionys Backchurch; St. Mary Somerset; St. Michael Crooked Lane; St. Michael Queenhithe; and St. Mildred Poultry; the tower of St. Mary Somerset has not yet found a purchaser, and still stands in Upper Thames Street, though the church has been pulled down. St. Mary-at-Hill has narrowly escaped for the present.

tion, but of the interior it may safely be said that his fame as an architect is established by it, and is hardly increased by the subsequent erection of St. Paul's.

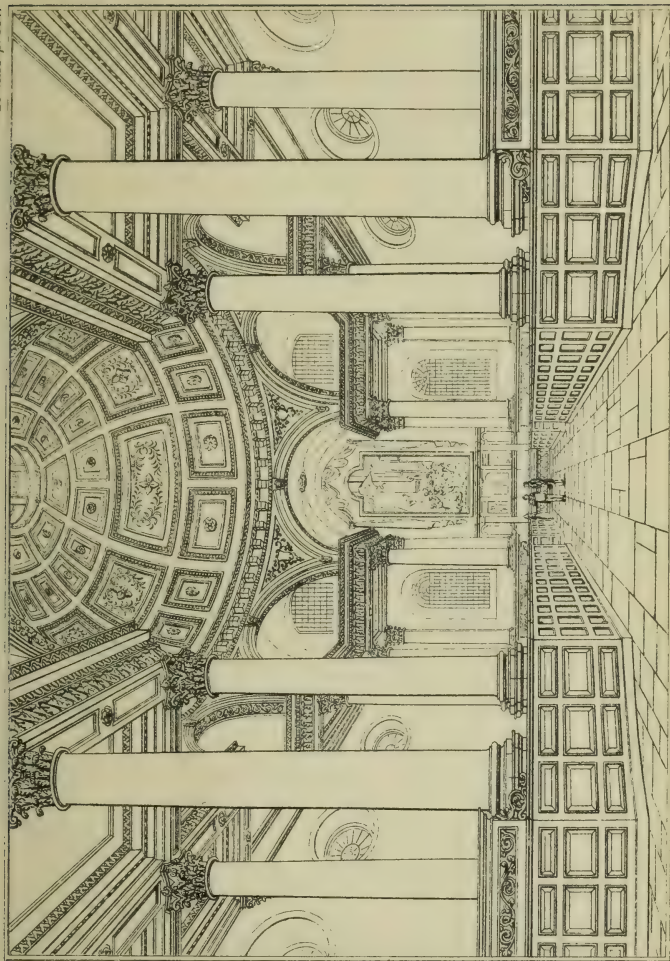
St. Stephen's is altogether satisfactory for the same reason that Sir Christopher Wren had no rivals and no successors.* The amount of thought expended on one little church which was not to cost so much as 8000*l.* shows us both why the design is so good and also why it has never been imitated. Wren was probably the second mathematician in England at the time, his only superior being Sir Isaac Newton. He knew the exact proportions which would produce the best effect. The church was somewhat pulled about and scraped during the height of the so-called gothic mania, a few years ago, but remains substantially as Wren left it. There was a proposal to cut down the pews. Had this been carried out the whole effect of the church would have been altered. At present, by one of the most subtle yet simple contrivances ever thought of, we see the whole of the area of the church without any interruption. Wren conceived the happy thought of elevating his pillars on bases, and concealing the bases with lofty pews. The real floor, the floor, that is, from which the whole design rises, is therefore on a level with the eye, and the visitor sees the church as if in a picture—as if he himself was not within it. In so small a building this is of the greatest service in enhancing the size. When it is empty, and the visitor sees no figure to measure its size, it appears gigantic. When “two or three are gathered together,” everything is changed, and it is betrayed as the miniature

* No one could ever make the kind of claim against Wren, for instance, which a son of Pugin's made for his father against Sir C. Barry. There is nothing in the Westminster Palace which might not have been designed by Pugin or by half-a-dozen other architects, but none of Wren's contemporaries or successors could have designed St. Stephen's.

of a grand cathedral.* The amount of work in planning and carrying out this small building must have been altogether out of proportion to its bulk. A few sentences from a paper on it by a competent architect † will exhibit its difficulties. "The plan results from an octagon inscribed in a circle whose diameter is equal to the distance between the centres of the extreme columns. The interior length of the church is the common measure of the other parts, one-half of it being given to the diameter of the circle about which the columns under the cupola are circumscribed. . . . The columns are of the Corinthian order, and it is truly astonishing to observe the advantage the architect has taken of so scanty a number as sixteen." But the great merits of St. Stephen's Wallbrook are not to be described by mathematical and architectural terms, however carefully chosen. They are better indicated in the simple fact that the effect charms the most ignorant visitor as it satisfies the most learned critic. To imitate work like this would require not only Wren's genius but his knowledge. We have had clever architects since his time, no doubt, but none who were able to apply to their designs his "capacity for taking trouble," and his previously-acquired mathematical experience, together with the natural eye for beauty which distinguished him. Wren stands alone in his own line as Shakespeare stands in his. Neither

* The dimensions of St. Stephen's are thus stated by Gwilt ('Edifices of London,' i. 34): "The main body of St. Stephen's Church (for the entrance and tower stand completely distinct from it), covers a plot of ground 87 ft. 10 in. in length from east to west, and 64 ft. 10 in. from north to south; its clear internal dimensions being 82 ft. 6 in. by 59 ft. 6 in. It is very singular that so many writers, including the author of the 'Parentalia,' should have invariably quoted its dimensions as 75 ft. by 56 ft." The dome is 45 ft. in diameter and 63 ft. in height. The aisles are 36 ft. high. (See Godwin and Britton, 'Churches of London,' ii. 273.)

† Gwilt *ut supra*.



INTERIOR OF ST. STEPHEN'S WALLBROOK.

(From "The Edifices of London.")

of them established a school, for the simple reason that no one in their time was worthy to be their scholar.

The largest, and in some senses the greatest, of Wren's buildings is that which he substituted for the venerable cathedral church of London. An exaggerated idea of Old St. Paul's has been formed of late. I have endeavoured above to form an impartial idea of what it was in reality. To say that Wren's church is a worthy successor is to disparage Wren. His work is in a different style, of course, and it is not possible to institute a just comparison. The only cathedral in Europe worthy to compete with Wren's is St. Peter's at Rome ; yet, except in the one matter of size, where St. Peter's has the advantage, St. Paul's is superior. It is not possible to compare St. Paul's adequately with either Salisbury or Ely ; but both comparisons have been made. Salisbury and St. Paul's are alone as having been begun and finished, or nearly finished, in the same style: Ely Cathedral presents the same complexities of plan as St. Paul's ; but carried very little further both comparisons fail. The slight irregularities of Salisbury only add to its picturesqueness, and the removal of an incongruous campanile by Wyatt is always ranked as an architectural crime ; or, at least, as that kind of mistake which is as bad as a crime. Ely has the fault of Old St. Paul's, and is in two very different styles. No classical or gothic addition—so as it is good of its kind—can very greatly injure it. But Wren's St. Paul's is a harmonious composition, complete and uniform, remarkable as much for its unity as for its beauty.* An incongruous addition, however good in itself, would be calculated to injure it. To

* I do not attempt any detailed account of St. Paul's. It is too familiar and has been too often described already ; nor do I describe at any length the previous design. See 'Magazine of Art,' June 1882, for an article on the subject by Mr. Basil Champneys.

a gothic cathedral it stands as an ode of Gray's stands to a ballad like Chevy Chase. A line, a word, subtracted or added, would spoil the ode. Half-a-dozen good verses would not hurt the ballad.

The great feature of St. Paul's, however, is neither its size nor its beauty, but its fitness, whether considered from an artistic point of view or from that of mere utility. It is sometimes objected to churches in a classical style that they are like heathen temples. This is perfectly true of St. Pancras New Church, for example, only that no real Greek building of the size would be so ugly. But St. Paul's is unmistakably a church, notwithstanding its classical details, and can never for a moment be mistaken for anything but a church. It is roomy and bright: people can see and hear in it. Windows are part of the design. At St. Pancras windows exist in spite of the style. At St. Paul's the dominant problem in the architect's mind was how to make it possible and convenient for the largest number of people to worship or to be taught together. It is not too large for the dome itself to be used as St. Paul's Cross was used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There are probably no such congregations in the world as those which assemble in St. Paul's Sunday after Sunday, and all can hear, all can see.

It is said to be the test of Handel's oratorios that they may be sung by any number of voices that can be assembled, and that they sound better and better as the choir is increased in strength. St. Paul's Cathedral stands the test of numbers in the same way, and never looks so well as when it is most full of worshippers. But its fitness is evidenced in many other ways, and it may safely be asserted that no church has been built since the Reformation which so completely answers its purpose

St. Paul's, as Wren first designed it, was to be a single-storeyed building with two domes, one considerably smaller than the other, and with a portico strongly resembling Inigo Jones's. The interior was evidently a matter for more thought with him than the exterior. In fact, it would have consisted mainly of the space under a great dome, with a vestibule formed under the smaller one. But court or other influence was against it, and after some delay Wren proceeded to sketch a design on the lines of a gothic church. It was to be cruciform in plan, to have side aisles and a clear-storey, and at least a couple of chapels. To all these conditions he submitted, but very unwillingly, and the drawing, which still exists, as approved by the king and the commissioners, fulfilled them all, but is without any exception the poorest and weakest design which ever issued from his hands. We can, in fact, scarcely recognise his work in it. But to the king and his brother it mattered little whether Wren had done his best or his worst so that they had a church suitable to the religious worship which one of them already openly professed. The drawing was therefore passed, with the words "very artificial, proper, and useful."

It was no sooner thus accepted than Wren silently threw it aside. There is no known drawing extant of the church as we now see it. Three features, all wholly foreign to Wren's ideas of good taste, exist in the building, all forced upon him by his employers. The existence of a central aisle and clear-storey rendered it necessary that a kind of screen should be built above the walls of the side aisles. The general appearance of the whole building becomes at once two-storeyed. So also the dome could no longer cover the wide space at first intended, but must be circumscribed to suit the altered

plan. This led to another constructive deception, and we have now, in fact, three domes ; an inner one, which is that seen within the church ; an outer one, which is that seen from the street ; and between the two a cone-shaped building of brick made to carry the weight of the central lantern, with its ball and cross. Lastly, when the work approached completion, a balustrade, which is not a classical feature, but borrowed from the gothic, was proposed, and Wren a third time had to submit. "Ladies," he said scornfully, in an official reply to the commissioners, "think nothing well without an edging."

With these faults, which probably Wren himself disliked more than any one else, St. Paul's is deserving of all the admiration it receives. Much time and talk have been spent of late on the subject of the decorations. A large sum of money has been laid up, and something will undoubtedly be done before long. I confess, apart from artistic considerations, that I am glad to have been allowed to see it as Wren left it, before the altered arrangement of the organ, before the intrusion of the interior porches, before the introduction of the incongruous, if handsome pulpit under the dome : and before the old grey, ghostly figures on the dome are supplanted by modern mosaics.

The dimensions of St. Paul's are well known. The figures are easily remembered. The tip of the cross is as many feet from the pavement as there are days in the year. The extreme length is 500 ft., the width in the transepts being just half. The dome which is 145 feet in outward diameter, is only 108 within, for the reason stated above. The middle aisle of the nave is 80 feet in interior height. The western towers are 222 feet high.

The annoyances to which the architect of this great edifice was exposed grew in part out of the political

history of the times. He kept as much as possible aloof from politics, but we must remember that St. Stephen Wallbrook was begun the year after wide-spread ruin came upon London merchants by the closing of the Exchequer* amid declarations of war with Holland. The first stone of St. Paul's was laid on the 21st June, 1675, the year of Charles the Second's disgraceful treaty with France. The College of Physicians, in Warwick Lane, was finished as William and Mary ascended the throne. The choir of the new cathedral was first opened for service in 1697, the year of the Peace of Ryswick.

Wren was not well treated in his old age, and he lived to be older than Inigo Jones. It is quite possible that the magnitude of his own architectural faculty had a bad influence on his contemporaries. No one could hope to approach him, so no one attempted it.† The one architect who came near him was an amateur, a man whose leisure enabled him to work out the subtle and difficult questions of proportion, as Wren worked them without leisure. Lord Burlington is now hardly known. The little he built was of rare excellence, and men of inferior genius have tried to improve it, and have only succeeded in spoiling it.‡ But what Burlington, working slowly, with every kind of professional help, with no one or nothing to hurry him, was able to do

* See next chapter.

† See criticisms on Gibbs, Hawksmoor, Vanbrugh, and others, in the second volume.

‡ The barbarous treatment of Burlington House by some ignorant builder a very few years ago is typical. The additions are costly, loaded with ornament, and—hideous. The architect, if indeed an architect was employed, had no idea that proportion was an element in the beauty of the house he defaced. The original designs are in 'Vitruvius Britannicus,' iii. 22-24. A rejected design is in vol. i. 31-32. A beautiful design for a house for General Wade, by Lord Burlington, is in vol. iii. 10.

twice or thrice, Wren did habitually and did better. He thought out each design to the utmost. Whatever his hand found to do, he did it with all his might. After his time art in this country was at as low an ebb as it has ever reached. Before his death he had retired to a house he had bought in Warwickshire, and thence once a year he used to come to London and sit for a while under the mighty dome he had built. When he died, at length, in his ninety-first year, they bore his body to repose in the crypt, and his son placed over the grave the memorable words, now likewise inscribed in a prominent part of the church above—

“*Si monumentum requiris circumspice.*”

A View of LONDON in 1710 by F de Wit, of Amsterdam



CHAPTER XIII.

THE BANK.

WHILE Wren was rebuilding London, the king was doing all he could to ruin the Londoners. Experience had taught the Stuarts nothing. Charles II. could not see, any more than his unfortunate father, that the prosperity of the kingdom, nay even of the king himself, was bound up in the prosperity of the city. The consequences of his disastrous policy fell slightly on himself, but they ruined his successor. There can be no doubt that the dethronement of the dynasty became a certainty when London had decided against it. The causes of that decision have been detailed by many historians, and notably by one for whose readers no new arrangement of facts would have much interest.* It will be only necessary here, therefore, to state those circumstances which relate strictly to the city, and especially those which resulted in the establishment of a modern "guild merchant" of such power that it regulates the trade, not of London only, nor even of England, but of Europe and the world.

The wealth of London, even after the great fire, was enormous, but the principal part of it was in the hands of the goldsmiths. What the mercers had been in the sixteenth century, the goldsmiths were in the seventeenth. They did not call themselves bankers, but professed to keep "running cashes," or, in modern

* Macaulay, 'History of England, from the accession of James II.'

language, current accounts. Gradually they gave up goldsmith work and confined their business to money. Lombard Street became and continues to be their headquarters, as it had been that of the Italian money-lenders of the thirteenth century—the goldsmiths having previously occupied the western end of Cheap, where Old Change still commemorates their residence and the object of their trade. In 1677* there were no fewer than thirty-seven goldsmiths keeping running cashes in Lombard Street. The seizure by Charles I. of a sum said to have amounted to 200,000*l.* which the London goldsmiths had deposited for safety in the Tower, forced them to find some better use for money than storing it. The practice of lending it at a moderate rate of interest was very soon followed by that of receiving it upon deposit. Thus, as early as the time of the Commonwealth, banking, as we understand it, was flourishing. Cheques, under the name of “goldsmith’s notes” were in use. Oliver Cromwell himself had an account† at the *Marygold*, a house just within Temple Bar in which William Wheeler kept running cashes. He had also dealings with Edward Backwell, of the *Unicorn* in Lombard Street, Alderman of the Ward of Bishopsgate.

The great banker of the day was this Edward Backwell. Pepys mentions him many times. Among the diarist’s most self-complacent entries are those which tell of the money he laid out in table silver, and in cups for presents. But Pepys also visited Backwell for political

* F. G. Hilton Price’s ‘Handbook of London Bankers,’ p. 60, and the reprint of the ‘London Directory’ of 1677. Mr. Price’s paper on “Edward Backwell,” read before the London and Middlesex Archæological Society, throws much light on the commercial history of London in this reign.

† The book in which the Protector’s account was entered has been lost; but many of Messrs. Wheeler’s ledgers are in possession of the present firm of Child and Co., on the same site.

purposes. The pay of the troops in the garrison of Dunkirk, and other expenses connected with that fort, went through the great goldsmith's hands, as did the money received from the French when, so much to the disgust of his subjects, Charles II. sold Dunkirk to Louis XIV. Backwell also made loans to the crown on various kinds of security, and Pepys went to him in 1665 to advance a small sum for the navy. Backwell was constantly sent by the king on messages to France, and we may be sure was the intermediary in many money dealings between Charles and Louis after the famous treaty of Dover. Before the fire he used to take deposits, allowing as much as 6 per cent. interest at twenty days' call, and even $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or more for money on demand. All the bankers' houses in Lombard Street perished in the great fire, and Alderman Backwell, on account of the great importance of the public services he was able to perform, had a special precept from the king to secure him lodgings in Gresham House, where he could carry on business until the rebuilding of the *Unicorn*. He continued to flourish. Loan after loan he negotiated to meet the necessities of Charles, the war with the Dutch, and the fortification of Tangier. He bought houses in Lombard Street and lands in Huntingdonshire, but the bulk of his fortune was in Treasury bonds, for the king owed him a quarter of a million the year after the fire, and nearly 300,000*l.* in 1672.

There was keen competition among these early bankers, and other "goldsmiths" besides Backwell had dealings with the government. One of the most eminent of his rivals was connected with him by family ties. Tyningham Backwell, his son, married the daughter of Sir Francis Child, who had succeeded Wheeler at the *Marygold* just within the newly-built archway of Temple Bar. Part of

the house, indeed, stood on ruins of the Templars' outer courts, and remains of ancient vaultings are said still to exist in the cellars of the bank. For Child's still flourishes, though Temple Bar is gone, and no member of the firm bears the original surname. The mysterious little chamber over the arch, with its many-paned windows, one looking up Fleet Street, and one down the Strand, was rented for 50*l.* a year from the city by the Messrs. Child, just as Chaucer had rented the rooms over Aldgate in 1374*—and was used as a store for old documents. It had been intended for a porter's lodge, and when the Bar was pulled down in 1878, the staircase, long built up, was exposed. High up in the roof, just under the grinning skulls of traitors, was another little closet, approached by a ladder, and perhaps designed as a lock-up for the porter's use when disorderly characters disturbed the peace of Fleet Street.

The family had become connected with the *Marygold* by a double marriage. Sir Joshua Child, an early governor of the East India Company, whose daughter carried an immense fortune into the Somerset family, now represented by his descendant the duke of Beaufort, had a younger brother,† apprenticed to William Wheeler. He was mentioned above as keeping Cromwell's running cash account, and had first set up as a goldsmith in Cheap, removing to Temple Bar early in the reign of Charles I. The apprentice, according to the time-honoured city custom, married his master's daughter, and the apprentice's mother, Mrs. Child, married the master's surviving partner, Robert Blanchard. The business was thus kept in the family, and in 1681 Francis Child was sole owner and took John Rayer into the firm as his junior.

* Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 377.

† This is not quite certain. See Price.

This was not until after a crisis had occurred in the history not only of this, but also of every other London banker of the day. Nearly all were ruined, but Child's and another eminent firm escaped by the same means. In 1672 the government of Charles II. was so far from representing a majority of the nation that it comprised within the celebrated "Cabal" almost all the eminent men in the kingdom who thought with the king. The Cabal did not dare to call Parliament together. They had obtained a subsidy from the late House of Commons with a view to helping the Dutch against Louis XIV. They had employed it to fit out a fleet and attack the Dutch. In order to carry on this unpopular enterprise further supplies were necessary. But how to obtain more money, without the aid of a Parliament, was a problem no one could solve, until Clifford happened to consult a man much more clever than himself, the celebrated Shaftesbury. He obtained from him by plying him, it was said, with wine till he forgot his prudence, a scheme so effectual, but so iniquitous, that we need not wonder if in a more sober moment he would have kept it to himself. Charles had openly avowed that he would give the white staff of the treasury to any one who could show him where to find a million and a half. Clifford entering the royal presence claimed the staff, and unfolded the Shaftesbury plan. It consisted simply in closing the exchequer and seizing the goldsmiths' deposits.

Of course such an abominable piece of dishonesty must be kept secret. Yet, somehow, it got abroad to a limited extent at least. Among the goldsmiths who had money in the royal exchequer at the time was one who is still represented among city bankers. Messrs. Martin in Lombard Street, are the mercantile descen-

dants of Charles Duncombe, who in 1672 kept running cashes at his house, the *Grasshopper*, where a century before Gresham had carried on his extensive operations. The sign was in existence till the houses were first numbered in 1770, and was stolen by a dishonest workman when the old house was rebuilt a little later. The modern bank is on the original Elizabethan site, and may therefore justly claim to be the oldest commercial establishment left in London. Evelyn notices Duncombe's shrewdness in business not without censure, and Pope, who was born, it might be said, under the shadow of the *Grasshopper*, has gibbeted him in well known lines as "a scrivener, or city knight." Shaftesbury was among the depositors in Duncombe's bank, and Child also had influential men among his customers. Both these houses had warning of the impending crash in time to withdraw their money. But the king's principal creditor, Edward Backwell, and many others, knew nothing of it, and were ruined. The money in the exchequer consisted mainly of customers' deposits. When Charles seized upon the whole sum, the goldsmiths could not meet the demands upon them, even though, to repair in some degree the loss they sustained, the king gave them promises of interest at what would now be thought a high rate. We even hear of "runs" upon some banks which were not connected with the royal treasury, and the mere news caused such a panic as has seldom if ever since been seen in the city. The whole sum which Charles thus acquired by the plunder of the citizens, amounted to above thirteen hundred thousand, equal to at least three million sterling in the reckoning of the present day.

Thus did the son of "the man Charles Stuart" walk in the footsteps of his father, and, forgetting London's loyalty to him in his early years, the embassy to Holland,

the welcome and acclamations on Blackheath, reward the trust reposed in his royal honour. He never made peace with the city, and during the remaining years of his disastrous reign, though a spark of loyalty was towards the end of it rekindled by the rumours of popish plots, and by the king's last illness, he laboured only to humble it more and more. On their side the Londoners intrigued with Shaftesbury against him and his brother, afterwards James II., and almost openly communicated with the prince of Orange. The marriage of the princess Mary with William was joyfully received "as a Protestant match, and as ensuring a Protestant successor to James." But Charles was still reigning, and James might and did marry again, and have a son. The prospect was gloomy enough. Charles took occasion when the Londoners harboured Shaftesbury to show them signs of his royal displeasure, and as in the case of ancient kings, whose history he might have laid to heart with advantage, he found eminent citizens willing to further his designs on the liberties of the city. We seem to be reading a chapter in the annals of Henry III. or Richard II. when we find a mayor, Sir John Moore, devoted to the court, and endeavouring to further the king's views by securing the election of at least one of the sheriffs. Ten years had elapsed since the closing of the exchequer, but that arbitrary and dishonourable act was still fresh in the memory of the people. They refused the mayor's nominee by an immense demonstration in favour of the sheriffs they had chosen, Papillon and Dubois. In this they were assisted and supported by the two sheriffs still in office, Pilkington and Shute, and by an alderman, Henry Cornish, whose tragical fate remains to be told. All three were summoned on the complaint of the lord mayor before the Privy Council, and committed to the

Tower. The Habeas Corpus Act was, however, now in force, and the sheriffs were produced at the bar of the king's bench, and pleading not guilty were admitted to bail by the judges. A fresh election was ordered by the lord mayor, and again his nominee was defeated by the votes of the commonalty. The king and court meanwhile had constantly interfered, and there can have been no doubt in the minds of the people as to the question involved. Papillon and Dubois were by an order in council superseded, and on a new election, Box and North were declared elected. Box, seeing the state of the case, refused to serve, whereupon Rich was substituted for him, and he and North were sworn in before the mayor.* The juries they packed left the life of every citizen who opposed the duke of York, or supported the exclusion bills, at the mercy of the court. Shaftesbury saw that, so far as he was concerned, liberty was no longer assured though one jury had acquitted him, and he prudently retired to Holland, but Pilkington and Shute, the late sheriffs, with twelve aldermen, were accused of having spoken against James, or otherwise offended the court party, and were heavily fined, while Pilkington was superseded in his aldermanry by North, the second sheriff.

London was now at the king's mercy, and he used his power as former kings, his ancestors, had used theirs. We are irresistibly reminded by what ensued of Rokesley and Edward I., or, before their time, of FitzThomas and Henry III. The mayor and aldermen were summoned to show cause† why their charter was not forfeited because they had printed and published a petition in favour of

* The proceedings are minutely detailed by Maitland and Allen.

† The writ of summons was popularly known from this sentence as the *Quo warranto*.

exclusion which the king had refused ; because they had made illegal exaction of tolls towards the rebuilding of the city after the fire ; because they had scandalised the king's government and oppressed their fellow citizens, and, in short, though the court party avoided saying so, because Charles had determined, in the old phrase, "to take the city into his own hands." The court party were careful to manipulate the bench so as to insure a victory, and the citizens were told to expect the forfeiture of their liberties. They made the long journey to Windsor as FitzThomas and his company had made it four centuries before.* They were received by the king, who, through lord keeper North, explained the situation to them, and in view of the approaching civic elections, offered conditions which were simply subversive of the whole constitution for which their predecessors during so many generations had contended and suffered. But when the king's terms were afterwards debated in the Guildhall, strange as it may appear, an act of submission was carried by a small majority, and the king issued a commission under the great seal, appointing Sir William Pritchard to be mayor during the royal pleasure, and two other members of the court party, Daniel and Dashwood, to be sheriffs. This was the year of the "Rye House Plot," and many citizens were implicated. Lord Russell was beheaded in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and another city favourite, Algernon Sidney, upon Tower Hill, while the infamous judge Jeffreys summoned one after another of the popular leaders before his court, and fined or imprisoned them on the most frivolous charges. Papillon, for having served a writ on the lord mayor two years before, calling on him to declare valid his election to the

* This was 1683, so that FitzThomas's imprisonment took place 418 years previously.

shrievalty, was fined 10,000*l.*, and refusing to pay had to seek safety in flight. He remained in Holland till the revolution.

The death of Charles only precipitated the quarrel between London and the crown. Yet the oppressed citizens, when the king was in danger, knowing that a worse ruler was in store for them, crowded the churches to pray for his recovery, and a feeling sprang up very like the old sentiment of personal loyalty. But it was only in fulfilment of the mocking opinion which Charles had himself expressed to his brother when he said, "They will never kill me, James, to make you king."

Nor were the citizens wrong in their apprehensions. James hardly needed the stimulus of Monmouth's rebellion to make him remember the petitioners of 1682. Had the whig party among the citizens then obtained their wishes he could never have reigned. The sheriff when Charles had refused the civic petition was alderman Cornish, and three of the companions of Jeffreys in the west, their hands still dyed with the blood of the Somerset assizes, came into the city to inflict the king's vengeance.* Cornish was on the Exchange transacting business when he received the fatal summons. His despair, for he must have seen at once that there was nothing to hope for in a consciousness of innocence, in the justice of a packed jury, or in the clemency of James, betrayed no fear, but he behaved, as a witness of his death declared, with the natural indignation of a man murdered under legal forms.

He was arrested on Tuesday, 13th October, 1685, hurried to Newgate and kept in solitary confinement, without pens, ink or paper, without any power of communicating with his friends, without counsel, nay, even

* Macaulay, chap. v.

without a knowledge of the nature of the charge against him. His children hastened to Whitehall, but James coldly referred them to the judges. On Saturday the prisoner received a copy of the indictment, and on Monday he was arraigned at the Old Bailey. Two informers appeared against him, both "by their own confession, accomplices in the plot with which they charged the prisoner."* The judges took part with the attorney-general in brow-beating the prisoner. In vain he pleaded that no time had been allowed for the preparation of his defence, and that a material witness was in the country and had not been summoned. He was brutally told that he did not deserve well enough of the government to have time allowed him,† or, in other words, that his fate was sealed before the hearing.

It may be asked how the government could count on obtaining a verdict from a jury of freemen in a case like this. But it must be remembered that the "city was in the hands of the king," as the ancient chronicles would have said, and that though there was a mayor, and though he had two sheriffs, yet the mayor was a nominee of the king—not, strictly speaking, a mayor at all, but a warden—and the sheriffs staunch members of the court party.‡ Cornish was found guilty, condemned, and four days later, on Friday the 23rd, he was led to his own door, at the corner of Queen Street in Cheapside,§ and put to

* Macaulay, chap. v.

† Maitland, i. 484.

‡ The mayor's name was Smith. Gosling and Vandeput were the sheriffs, but it does not appear which of them packed the jury.

§ Maitland says "at the end of King Street, facing his own house." This expression denotes as his a house at the opposite corner, namely, in Queen Street, formerly "Soper's Lane." Macaulay remarks that the spot is equally in sight of the Exchange and the Guildhall. It is so now, but probably in 1685 only the Guildhall could be seen from the corner of King Street.

death with the barbarity which then belonged to an ordinary execution for treason. The same day Elizabeth Gaunt was burned at Tyburn. William Penn, the Quaker, for whom, as Macaulay remarks, exhibitions which humane men generally avoid seem to have had a strong attraction, hurried from the city to St. Marylebone, and witnessed both the executions. The day was marked in the memories of the citizens by a tempest "such as had not been known since that great hurricane which had raged round the death-bed of Oliver."*

There is one house, and one only left in Cheapside which may have seen the death of Henry Cornish. It stands at the corner of Friday Street, and retains its old cross-mullioned windows. On its front is a stone carving, the chained swan of Henry V., which may survive from an older house on the same site before the fire. Of King Street and Queen Street as they were then we can form little notion. The scaffoldings were still about many houses. St. Mary-le-Bow was not long finished. The head of the murdered alderman was placed over the newly-repaired Guildhall, one of the few decorations of the kind it ever received, and typical of the abject state to which the city was reduced.

But a reaction was at hand. The trial of the bishops showed the temper of the great mass of the citizens. It was judged dangerous to conduct the prisoners through the streets, and they went to the Tower by water, but the people lined the banks of the Thames, and "expressed all the transports that love, compassion, and rage could beget."† Their acquittal was received with the loudest acclamations of joy. This was in June, 1688, and before October James saw that the policy his

* Macaulay.

† Maitland, i. 485.

brother and he had pursued towards the city was a mistake. But this conviction came too late to save him. It was in vain that he sent Jeffreys, the chancellor, in state to the Guildhall with the restored charter. No popular enthusiasm could be evoked. The address of thanks was studiously cold, and the news which came a month later, that William of Orange had landed at Torbay, was received with open expressions of thanksgiving. Even a forged proclamation was accepted as the genuine letter of the prince, and was printed and circulated. Riots against the Roman Catholics occurred almost daily, and were so far countenanced by the authorities that the grand jury of Middlesex brought in a true bill against a nobleman who had abjured Protestantism,* and the houses of those merchants who held to the unpopular faith were searched for arms by the lord mayor. The general suspense and excitement were heightened by rumours of the king's intended flight, and news of the actual departure of the queen and her infant son. On the 11th December, James took the great seal in his hands, drove from Whitehall in a hired coach, hired a boat at Millbank, dropped the seal into the river, landed at Vauxhall, and took the road to Sheerness.

The immediate consequences of the king's flight were momentous to London. Men looked about everywhere in vain for some one whose authority was undoubted. The king's virtual abdication dissolved the whole fabric of society, law, and order. No regency had been appointed. The prince had not arrived.† All eyes were turned towards the venerable body which still retained its ancient powers. The lord mayor reigned in London

* Macaulay, chap. ix. The earl of Salisbury.

† Macaulay, chap. x.

whether a king was at Westminster or not.* The lords of the council came into the city and were received in state at the Guildhall by the magistracy. The lieutenant of the Tower brought the keys of that fortress. A conference between the lords, with Archbishop Sancroft in the chair, was followed by a declaration calling upon the prince of Orange to maintain order. The lord mayor and the aldermen sent immediately four of their number with eight commoners, and formally invited William to the city.† A second invitation was despatched the same day. A loan of 200,000*l.* was speedily gathered, and amid rioting and the tumultuous plunder and destruction of the houses of the Roman Catholics, a petition was circulated and extensively signed, calling upon William and Mary to take possession of the vacant throne.

William was determined not to precipitate matters, and called upon the lord mayor to disavow the petition. But it was virtually adopted by the assembled convention, and the accession of the new sovereigns was received in London with frantic signs of joy.‡

One of the first cares of the new government was to make a formal restitution of the privileges which, under the tyrannies of Charles II. and his brother, had been for

* It will be remembered that in those days the "demise of the crown," not only dissolved parliament, but put an end to the commissions of the judges. The mayoralty, almost alone among English institutions of the kind, was unaffected by James's virtual abdication. Even the church staggered under the blow, and Sancroft himself felt its weight within a few months. (See vol. ii., 'Lambeth.')

† Maitland, i. 488.

‡ It is, of course, easy to make too much of the election of William by the city, but perhaps Lord Macaulay makes too little of it, and has not done justice to its constitutional significance. He mentions the Guildhall very casually, and places the action of the civic authorities in a subordinate place. (See above, chap. iii. and Freeman's 'Norman Conquest,' v. 411.) But several kings had ascended the English throne after a less formal election by the city of London.

a time called in question or withdrawn.* The proceedings in the judgment on the *Quo Warranto* were reversed and declared illegal by Act of Parliament, and London was restored fully to her ancient rights. Those rights had been defined, or at least recapitulated, by an early charter of Charles II., in which all the older charters were "inspected," and it is upon the statute thus passed under William and Mary that London now enjoys the ancient liberties handed down to her by generation after generation of citizens from days long before the Norman Conquest. They had been frequently endangered, and are endangered even now. Sometimes kings like the Angevins and the Stuarts invaded them; sometimes democrats who had little idea of the effects of their own headstrong passions, assailed them from within. To some men's minds it is a sin and a shame that any part of England should enjoy freedom without exact definition. Reformers envy the wealth of the city, and would apply it to many purposes for which it was never intended and in which it would do no good. The energy some agitators display in order to obtain the money which others have earned would, if better directed, make themselves rich.

The citizens watched William's Irish campaign with exceeding interest. The siege of Derry and its relief were of personal importance to many of them: for Londonderry, to give it the full title, was a colony specially sent out by London. The city still has an Ulster estate, and the grant of James I. to the mayor,

* 'Municipal London,' by Joseph Firth, p. 19. I shall have occasion further on to notice once again this portly volume. Here it will be sufficient to observe that the facts collected by Mr. Firth are treated with such an amount of bitter party feeling that their value is greatly lost, and their real significance obscured.

aldermen and commonalty of the ruins of the ancient Irish fort and of six thousand acres in the neighbourhood is extant. The citizens were slow to take advantage of their new property, and there was a time when it had almost become forfeit. But it seemed doubly precious after the siege, each circumstance of which was recounted with exultation* in the streets of the parent city. But the continental war was of even more importance, and led to consequences of which at the present day we reap the benefit, not in the city only but all over the world. The victories of war are as nothing in comparison with the victories of peace. The battle of Steinkirk and the fall of Namur are mere names to most of us, but we have all heard of the Funds and of the Bank of England. To William's policy we owe these institutions, and to these institutions London owes her supremacy among the commercial cities of the world.

The loan of 200,000*l.* with which London greeted the new king recalls a similar loan under similar circumstances to Henry VII., and betrays, as did the earlier grant, a feeling of confidence in the new dynasty, such as at the present day would be manifested by the state of the funds. But in 1689 the public funds had not yet come into existence, and the next step in commercial progress was, so to speak, to formulate or regulate the national debt, by instituting a corporation capable of dealing with it. The establishment of banks, as we have seen, had gone on rapidly during the reigns of the two last Stuarts. The closing of the exchequer, as the event proved, had rather tended to discredit the king

* One London firm, Clavel and Simpson, St. Paul's Churchyard, published in 1689 'Walker's Account,' as well as 'A new and exact map of London-derry and Culmore Fort, drawn with great Exactness by Captain Macullach, who was there during the siege.'

and his government than the victims of his fraud. Some of the older goldsmiths gave up the contest like Backwell, but others recovered from the blow, and the revolution found them much increased in numbers and in business. Charles had been obliged to ask a loan before the end of his reign, and though it had been declared on the closing of the exchequer that such a step showed that the court had resolved never to borrow again, but to take, he obtained it at the moderate interest of eight per cent. This betokens the keenness of the competition among the bankers. The principal was never repaid, but having been made part of the national debt by King William, eventually became the nucleus of the South Sea Fund.*

The idea of a great national bank seems to have been first started so far back as 1678. Five years failed however to give it definite shape. No mere plan for sustaining credit could have commanded success. Like most great enterprises in England, the eventual foundation of the national bank was owed to private enterprise. William Paterson was in many respects a visionary schemer. He had not only failed as a colonist, but had involved hundreds, if not thousands, of his fellow Scots in the disasters of the emigration to Darien. But in starting the banking scheme he had the good fortune to meet with thoroughly practical partners.† A proposal was laid before the queen in council by which the supplies needed for the use of the king in his foreign campaign, were to be obtained and forwarded without the numerous losses and percentages which sometimes reduced a Parliamentary subsidy one-half before it

* Francis, 'History of the Bank of England,' i. 35.

† The account of Paterson in Francis does not show his connection with the Bank of England in a clear light. It seems to assume more knowledge of the subject than most readers possess.

reached the royal treasury. Much opposition to the new scheme was naturally encountered. The Tory party, and especially the Jacobite section of it, foresaw the additional strength an abundant supply of money would confer on the revolutionary government. The usurers, and many who were merely financiers in a better sense, thought the bank would ruin them. The new measure was, however, introduced to the notice of parliament in the spring of 1694.* Paterson was only one of a number of projectors who had laid schemes of the kind before the legislature. The absurdity of some of them, the uselessness of others, the impracticability of the vast majority, caused Paterson's plan to be looked at with deep suspicion.

It was briefly this. A sum amounting to nearly a million and a half was to be borrowed by the government at eight per cent., and the subscribers to the loan were to be incorporated under the title of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England. When a clause had been inserted in the bill to the effect that the new bank was not to advance money to the government without the authority of parliament, it passed, to the great surprise, no doubt, of its framers and supporters, so loud and powerful had the opposition appeared. But at the moment money was in great demand, and no alternative scheme seemed likely to work so well. The opposition was even fiercer in the House of Lords than it had been in the Commons, but at the end of April 1694 the royal assent was obtained, and though, as Macaulay remarks, it was then as difficult to raise a million at eight per cent. as it would now be to raise forty times as much at half that rate,* the confidence in the administration, as well as in the scheme itself, was so

* Macaulay, chap. xx.

great that in ten days the sum required had been subscribed, and the treasury was actually in possession of it before it became due.

The success of Paterson's scheme does not seem to have enriched him. But he was not a man to whom any amount of money could bring wealth. The working of the plan devolved on Michael Godfrey, a man of a very different type. Although not of middle age, he was already wealthy and known in the city. He was strongly opposed to the Stuarts, and from the mere circumstance that he was a nephew of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey,* who was supposed to have been murdered fifteen years before by the "Popish Plotters," he attracted public attention and confidence. He obtained leave for the early meetings of the new company to be held at Mercers' Hall in Cheapside, but in October of the same year, 1694, he, in conjunction with ten other members of the company, signed an agreement by which Grocers' Hall in the Poultry was taken for eleven years, and here, the term having been renewed, the new society carried on business until 1734.† The first governor of the Bank of England was Sir John Houblon, to whose good offices, no doubt, the arrangement was due. "Here, in one room, with almost primitive simplicity, were gathered all who performed the duties of the establishment."‡ The secretaries and their clerks numbered only fifty-four.

It may be worth while to pause a moment to compare the condition of the Bank of England at the present day with the modest establishment here described. It now

* Macaulay, by a mistake, calls him "the brother of Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey," vol. ii. p. 483, ed. 1873.

† See Heath's 'Grocers' Company,' p. 31. This hall, becoming ruinous, was rebuilt in 1802.

‡ Francis, i. 65.

employs 900 officers of various grades. Its notes in circulation exceed the value of thirty-five millions. From fifteen to twenty millions are deposited in gold and silver in its vaults. About two millions sterling crosses its counters every day. The buildings cover the whole area of the church and churchyard of St. Christopher le Stocks, and indeed all the parish itself except a small portion on which the portico of the Royal Exchange is built, as well as large parts of the two adjacent parishes of St. Margaret Lothbury, and St. Bartholomew by the Exchange. For managing the payment of the interest on the National Debt the company receives 200,000*l.* a year. Such has been the growth of the single office opened in the Grocers' Hall in 1694.

Godfrey, who rather than Paterson must be considered the founder of the bank, and who possessed the pen of a clear and ready writer, defended the infant undertaking with success in a pamphlet * published in the following year, in which he set forth its great advantages, and justified his own reputation for foresight and prudence. As deputy governor he seems to have been practically manager of the whole concern, which, as he exultingly asserted, gave such a reputation to the government engagements—known as exchequer tallies—that they were currently taken by private persons at ten to fifteen per cent. less than before the establishment of the bank, “that it was the only fund ever settled in England that had lowered the interest of money”; and that notwithstanding the cost of the great war then raging, amounting on the part of England alone to thirty millions at least, the interest on the national debt had fallen.

When Michael Godfrey alluded to the war he little

* Reprinted in the second volume of Francis's ‘History of the Bank.’

thought he should himself be one of its victims. William III. was engaged at the siege of Namur in 1695, not a year after the Bank of England had removed to Grocers' Hall. London was kept in a state of constant distraction by a succession of rumours.* The fate of nations, it was known but too well, depended on success or failure. The malice of the Jacobites warmly seconded the cupidity of the stock jobbers. The king's death was eagerly discounted. Sometimes a mere whisper went abroad ; sometimes a messenger on horseback dressed in a military uniform galloped through the streets and spread dismay with the news that William had been killed. But it was observed during the whole time of this anxious siege that the simple test of a bet showed even the Jacobites to be believers in William's success. Before it came, however, Michael Godfrey had been sent to Namur to the king's camp to make some arrangements for the transmission of the soldiers' pay and other supplies. The great attack of the 17th July was actually going forward, and Godfrey's curiosity overcame his prudence. He ventured to the king's side amid a shower of bullets. William saw him with surprise and anger. "Mr. Godfrey, you ought not to run these hazards: you are not a soldier: you can be of no use to us here." Godfrey protested that he ran no greater danger than did his majesty. "Not so," said William, "I am where it is my duty to be ; and I may without presumption commit my life to God's keeping." As he spoke Michael Godfrey fell dead at his feet, slain by a French cannon-ball. His body was brought over to London and buried in St. Swithin's church, where his epitaph describes him as "a batchelour much lamented by all his friends." His "sorrowful mother"

* Macaulay, chap. xxi.

raised the monument to "the pious memory of her beloved son."*

The rivalry between the old goldsmiths' houses and the new institution was, of course, very keen, and might possibly have proved eventually fatal to the Bank of England. In fact, the enterprise was not three years old when it actually stopped payment.† The recoinage of silver prevented the company from meeting their notes in cash: they had received worn and clipped coin at its nominal value, and had to pay in full. By various expedients, however, they managed to protract the periods of payment, to gather in debts, and to call upon shareholders, till things righted themselves. The bank deserved well of the country at large, and various concessions were made by government, so that public confidence was immediately renewed. It was common to speak contemptuously, but shares went up, and bank stock rose from a discount of fifty per cent. to a premium of one hundred and twenty. In vain the private banks dashed themselves against the new corporation. They only rendered its position firmer. It lowered the interest of money, as poor Michael Godfrey had prophesied, and thus at once earned the gratitude of the public and the hatred of the bankers. Runs were constantly organised, and every device practised that could discredit it. It was said that both the Childs and the

* He was the son of another Michael, the brother of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, whence Macaulay's mistake. (See 'Arch. Cantiana,' vi. 261.) His mother was Mary the daughter of Thomas Chambrelan of Leadenhall Street. As he was born in February 1658, he was still a young man. The verses on his monument have disappeared, and are not worth reprinting from Maitland ii. 1184, though they contain a charming *non sequitur*. Mrs. Godfrey's monument is in St. Andrew's Undershaft.

† The account of this event in Francis, i. 75, is so wanting in clearness that a reader must conclude he desired to gloss over the whole story—and he perfectly succeeded.

Hoares purposely gathered large parcels of bank bills to present at once, but they had no success. The great war of queen Anne's reign did but make it more prosperous, and at the same time more necessary to the state. In 1707 the most dangerous run took place; but public confidence had now returned, and many private persons came forward with help. Godolphin, then lord treasurer, offered it various kinds of indulgence. Three wealthy dukes, including the cautious Marlborough, lodged large sums, and the crisis rapidly passed away. An anecdote shows the public temper at this momentous period. A poor man who had but 500*l.* in the world carried it to the bank when the run commenced. "Good Queen Anne" heard of him, and sent him 100*l.* as a present, and an obligation on the treasury for the whole of his venture.

The further history of the Bank of England is that of England itself. By slow degrees it has risen to such a position that its proud title does not fully describe it. The whole world comes to its coffers, and its name has passed into a common proverb as the emblem of stability. The old building has been enlarged over and over again. The modest house of Sir John Houblon in Threadneedle Street, where its first building was erected, would not now accommodate a tenth part of the business. In one of its courts stands a statue, dedicated in 1734, to the memory of "the best of princes, William III., the founder of this bank."

It would be easy to occupy all the remainder of my space with particulars of the old goldsmiths and their successors. The revolution in politics did not more thoroughly alter the character of the government than the establishment of banking altered the tendency and tone of London business. Before a century had elapsed

from the foundation of the Bank of England, the city had become what we know it, a place not so much for residence as for commerce. It is now a vast honeycomb of offices. The sight of a little child in "the city" is as rare as that of a butterfly. People come in and go out : few stay the night. Here and there a tradesman lives over his place of business, as in the good old times, but he must be very poor or very peculiar if he has no villa in the country whither he can retire in the intervals of work. A hundred years ago, however, many citizens still lived on their business premises. When lord Westmorland, on a memorable occasion, dined with Robert Child it was in the banking-house in Fleet Street. This was the lord Westmorland who, being in love with Child's only daughter, Mary Anne, and knowing that the banker was far too well acquainted with the financial condition of the Fane family ever to consent to their union, asked him across the table what he should do if he was attached to a girl whose father opposed the match. "Why, run away with her, to be sure," was the banker's incautious reply. Lord Westmorland and Miss Mary Anne took him at his word. They eloped, but were hotly pursued by the indignant father. Mr. Child had the best horses and gained on the fugitives. But the earl was a good shot, and kneeling upon the seat he fired a pistol over the back of the carriage. The bullet took effect, and one of the banker's horses rolled over on the road.* By this very questionable manœuvre the fugitives succeeded in reaching Gretna Green, but Mr. Child never forgave them, though, as his death occurred within three months afterwards, and as he left everything to the eldest child named Sarah, after his wife,

* Mr. Heywood Hardy's picture of this scene is well known. It was just a century ago, for the marriage took place in 1782.

that should be born of the marriage, it cannot be said that he was likely to have remained long obdurate. As it was the Fanes did not profit very largely by the fortune of the banker's heiress. Lest the legacy should lapse, it is said that each of the children of lord and lady Westmorland was baptised by the name of Sarah, including the only son, but the eldest daughter survived to marry lord Jersey, and her grandson is the present head of the firm in Fleet Street.

The story of the South Sea Bubble has been often told. It is only the first and greatest of a long list of similar examples. Wild speculation, followed by deep depression, has ebbed and flowed in the city almost as regularly as the tide in the Thames. The year 1720 was memorable for the Mississippi Bubble in Paris, as well as for the South Sea delusion at home. The success of the Bank of England excited the imagination of schemers. Knaves were only too ready to take up any design that would impose for a time on fools. But the South Sea scheme differed from the countless bubbles of the day in attracting many who must be allowed to have had at least common sense. Walpole, indeed, stood aloof. When the South Sea Company offered, in exchange for trading concessions, to relieve public burdens to the extent of nearly a million a year, he warned the country against indulging in a dream.* But every one else went mad. The king himself and his ministers partook of the general excitement. Thread-needle Street, where the South Sea House was situated, sometimes became impassable with crowds from the other end of town, all thronging to invest. Stock at one time rose to 1100*l.* per cent. premium. It may be asked in what trade the company proposed to engage.

* Green, iv. 136.

This is one of the disgraceful features of the story. The ostensible object of the company was to rival, and if possible out-do Spain in the abominable slave trade. The South Sea was that part of the Atlantic Ocean which lies between the Brazils and Western Africa. The coffee-houses in Exchange Alley near the chief scene were filled daily with speculators.* Prior and Gay, the poets, staked and lost heavily. The duke of Chandos spent 300,000*l.* of which nothing returned to him. At last, in November, the bubble burst, when the crash actually brought down the ministry. Stanhope died of it, as did Craggs, the secretary of state. His father, who was postmaster-general, poisoned himself. These were only a few of the victims. Ruin fell upon thousands of innocent persons, and probably no event since the great fire caused such widespread misfortune. The South Sea stock itself was only one of many. There were companies for making butter from beech trees; for teaching wise men to calculate nativities; for casting cannon balls; for the discovery of perpetual motion; nay, incredible as it may seem, these were among the saner projects. A subscription of two millions was started for "a promising design to be hereafter promulgated," and another for "carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is." Even this insolent attempt on the credulity of speculators succeeded. In five hours 2000*l.* were deposited, and the ingenious author of the proposal disappeared and was heard of no more.†

At this conjuncture Walpole and the Bank of England concerted measures which, wild as they seem now, were

* A well-known picture by E. M. Ward, R.A., truthfully represents the scene in Change Alley as it appeared in 1720.

† Francis, 'History of the Bank,' i. 135.

nothing to what had been proposed and almost carried. But though they led to a run on the bank they saved the national credit.* The rising of 1715 affected the welfare of the bank for the moment much more heavily : but, with the proverbial want of political sagacity which characterised the Stuarts, threats of confiscation, of repudiation, and of forced loans and contributions alarmed the city, and though the funds fell to 49, and a run was, as usual, made on the bank, it “literally faced its creditors :” the citizens came forward promptly, and as the danger passed away the bank was more firmly fixed than ever in the confidence of the people, and has never since had to sustain the effects of a similar panic.

* These measures are described in technical language by Francis (i. 138):—“Many expedients were started ; when the Bank, fearful of compromising their own safety, withdrew from the field. Amongst others, an engraftment of nine millions of the South Sea Stock into Bank, and nine into East India Stock. Warm and varied debates occurred at the Courts ; and the proposition, though at last agreed to, and confirmed by Act of Parliament, was afterwards abandoned. . . . In 1722 the South Sea Company was allowed to sell 200,000*l.* government annuities, and the Bank of England took the whole at twenty years’ purchase at a price equal to par.” See also ‘*Ency. Brit.*,’ 9th ed., iii. 313.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CORPORATION.*

WE have now to see the last attempt made by an English king to oppress the city. The accession of the house of Brunswick was popular with the Londoners, and, as I endeavoured to show in my last chapter, the support of the citizens was among the strongest bulwarks of the kingdom against the rebellion of 1715. It was the same in 1745, and both George I. and George II. were very well received at their rare visits to the Guildhall or the Mansion House. Their reigns are chiefly remarkable in the city for the local improvements carried out. The Fleet river was covered over, after a vain attempt to make it a canal in accordance with Wren's suggestion, as far as Holborn Bridge. The precinct of Blackfriars was finally incorporated with the ward of Farringdon Within, on the verdict of a jury from Hertfordshire, summoned specially for the purpose. This was in 1735, and twenty years later the project for making a new bridge over the Thames took shape, the course of the Fleet became a roadway, and not only was the new bridge named after the Blackfriars, but a Blackfriars Road appeared in Surrey on the opposite bank. A newer bridge at the same spot was opened in 1867 by the queen in person, and springs from arches actually

* I have failed to trace the first use of this word. In the controversies of the reign of George III. it came into use to distinguish the mayor, aldermen and common council from the livery at large.



LONDON BRIDGE BEFORE 1561.

As sketched by Van den Wyngaerde.

London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross.

built over the outfall of the old tidal estuary, which now, as the Fleet sewer, discharges a certain amount of the surface drainage, and occasionally betrays its existence after heavy rains or a sudden thaw.

Other great improvements and alterations followed. The completion of St. Paul's, the last of a long series of churches and public buildings which were rebuilt after the great fire, seems to have given leisure and money for other work, and the last year of the life of our second Hanoverian king saw the final removal of the old defences. The plans of Mylne were accepted for Blackfriars Bridge, and the first pile driven with civic ceremony in June 1760; and in the same month the Court of Common Council empowered a committee to take measures, under an act passed in the previous year, for widening the streets. The gates were pulled down, though some of them were nearly new, and the materials sold, and now the antiquary has to seek diligently for the slightest fragment of the wall which in days gone by had so often saved London. Little of Roman work remained, but here and there were the flat Roman bricks. Of the gothic archways only one had survived, namely, Cripplegate, though it was in wretched condition, and had been repaired and altered several times. Newgate had been frequently rebuilt, and subsisted until 1777. But Ludgate, which was also used as a prison, stood more in the way and was pulled down and the materials sold for 148*l.*, all except a statue of queen Elizabeth, which had been set up at one of the frequent rebuildings, and which was removed to Fleet Street. There, somewhat restored, it still stands at the entrance of St. Dunstan's Church.*

* Aldgate, which had been rebuilt in 1606, was sold for 177*l.* 10*s.* Cripplegate only fetched 91*l.* Moorgate had been rebuilt in 1672, Aldersgate about the same time, and a new Bishopsgate had only been finished a few years before its final removal.

But besides removing the gates a still more serious change was carried out. Old London Bridge had long been the chief pride of the citizens. Snorro Sturlesen, a foreign visitor, writing in the thirteenth century, observed that the bridge was so wide that two carriages if they met could pass each other. Peter, the curate of St. Mary Colechurch, in Cheap, was a great engineer and architect. He perched his own church on arches to be out of the way of the fine buildings he erected for the canons of St. Thomas. The building of London Bridge in stone had been preceded by the wooden bridge he made in 1163, a little further to the eastward. Nothing can give a better idea of the size of Peter's piers than the fact that the ninth contained a chapel, dedicated, like the hospital of his patrons, to St. Thomas of Canterbury. The chapel was sixty-five feet long, twenty feet wide and forty high; the roof was supported by fourteen clustered columns, and there were eight windows. In a lower chapel or crypt was the grave and monument of Peter himself: and there were two entrances, one from the "street" on the bridge, and one from the river below. At the suppression of chantries, four chaplains belonged to St. Thomas's, London Bridge. This ninth pier was as nearly as possible in the middle of the bridge, and the chapel looked to the east. There were twenty arches in all, of various sizes, and the rush of water through them, especially at high tides, made the navigation very dangerous.* Peter was thirty-three years carrying out the work, or two years less than the time Wren was employed upon St. Paul's.

The houses on London Bridge were several times destroyed by fire and as often rebuilt, the whole effect

* It was calculated that of the whole waterway, there about 900 feet at low water, the piers occupied 700.

in the fifteenth century being very magnificent. It had begun to decay at the time van den Wyngaerde sketched his view, but even then justified the proverb, "as fine as London Bridge," which was in common use. The Ponte Vecchio in Florence is the only building left in Europe which gives us an idea of what it was like,* but its great length, the size of the stone towers and gates, the picturesque wooden houses, projecting over the piers, the three "vacancies," with their wrought-iron grates whence people could view the passage of the boats up and down the river, and whence, as we have seen, they could, when so disposed, molest the passengers, the waterwheels under some of the arches, the locks under others, the drawbridge, must have made London Bridge one of the most picturesque relics of antiquity in the city. † Only the houses as far as the first vacancy at the northern end were burnt in 1666: but before another century had elapsed, it was found impossible to leave it unchanged. Much precious merchandise and many lives were lost shooting the arches. The traffic across the bridge was impeded by the houses. In 1754 it was found that their annual rent ‡ did not amount to a thousand pounds. An act of parliament was obtained and all were cleared away, while two piers were demolished and a wider waterway made by throwing a single arch across the space thus gained. The carriage-way was widened to 31 feet, which was thought an immense boon, though it compares strangely with the width of the roadway of the present bridge which is found inadequate.

* I regret to hear that it has been resolved to remove the houses on the Ponte Vecchio.

† The views by E. W. Cooke, R.A., may be seen at the Guildhall Library.

‡ It was 828*l.* 6*s.*

At length in 1823 a new bridge was decided on. In July the necessary powers were obtained from parliament, and the work was commenced in the following March. It was completed in 1831, and cost less than half a million, though the approaches, which had to be made through old streets, raised the whole expense to a million and a half. Rennie was the architect and it is allowed by every one that London Bridge as it stands now is a credit to the city. Instead of the old twenty arches there are but five, and the roadway over them is almost level. Hardly any perceptible obstruction is caused to the tide or stream by the narrow and compact piers. Already it is found insufficient for the traffic, and various proposals have been made for widening it, none of them, so far, of a kind to be recommended. The space between Fishmongers' Hall and St. Magnus' church will not admit of the obvious idea of doubling the present width without the destruction of one or other, or, perhaps, both. Yet something must soon be done, for the traffic which consisted even ten years ago of 116,000 vehicles a week, is increasing; the freeing of Southwark Bridge, which had been opened in 1819, and the rebuilding of Blackfriars Bridge have only demonstrated that some way across the river below London is what is needed.

The first two kings of the house of Hanover almost effaced themselves, so far as personal power was concerned. George III., with perhaps less capacity than either, was determined to revive the prerogative of the crown so far as he thought he could do it with safety. His accession was marked by the usual addresses of congratulation, and people observed with pleasure that the young king was born an Englishman. George may have thought that this fact, and the total disappearance

of such dangers from Jacobite pretenders as had menaced his predecessors, would have enabled him to ignore the results of the revolution, and assume a personal sovereignty which, as he soon found, was incompatible with the re-established liberty of his subjects. His favourite minister, lord Bute, was more unpopular in the city than any other statesman since the Cabal. When the elder Pitt resigned, a year after the young king's accession, the Court of Common Council prepared an address of thanks for the results of his administration, and added, after very slight opposition, an expression of regret at his removal from office. But the king was not to be warned by these expressions of displeasure at his policy. The Test Act, in keeping up a feeling of irritation, and excluding eligible dissenters from filling civic office, had been partially disarmed by an annual bill of indemnity under Walpole's administration, but its rigours were now again put in force, and three elected sheriffs were successively set aside between 1760 and 1762. On the other hand, the ignorant mob which had howled a few years before at the prosecution of a foolish high-church preacher named Sacheverell, now kept the city in constant dread by fanatical outbreaks, when the destruction of life and property was only put down by sanguinary reprisals and wholesale executions. The irritable temper of the lower ranks was fanned into a flame by the injudicious measures of Bute ; and a citizen of discreditable antecedents, but undeniable powers, named Wilkes, in a publication which, in derision of the Scottish minister, he entitled the *North Briton*, brought matters to a crisis. Pitt, in spite of his haughty demeanour, was the darling of the citizens. "When the dismissed statesman went to the Guildhall, the Londoners hung on his carriage wheels, hugged his footmen, and

even kissed his horses." * They had stood by him in his long struggle with Newcastle, and now, though he took little part in the contest, they hated Bute for his sake.

The popularity of Pitt, and his great city supporter, Beckford, was transferred for a while vicariously to Wilkes. How far he was worthy of the people's favour, in spite of his winning manners, appears from many anecdotes. Boswell describes the spell he threw over Dr. Johnson, and every one who has heard of him has heard of the social powers of which, in spite of his ugly face and his squint, he boasted, when he said that with half an hour's start he could excel the handsomest man in Europe in winning hearts. The original object of his attacks on Bute was, as he often cynically avowed, the attainment of a pension or an office under government. He had squandered the fortune left him by his father, an honest wine merchant in St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, and is reported to have said of the government that if they did not find employment for him, he was disposed to find it for them. And he succeeded. When, during an enforced absence on the continent, he was asked by Madame de Pompadour, "How far may an Englishman go in abuse of the royal family and the court?" he replied promptly, "I do not quite know, but I am trying to find out."

The forty-fifth number of the *North Briton* was one of these attempts. It had national and constitutional results far beyond its merits. It consisted in a criticism on the speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament in 1763, and was considered so scurrilous, that the ministry issued a general warrant for the arrest of all concerned in its production and publication. Forty-eight printers, publishers, and other tradesmen were speedily

* Green, iv. 215.

swept up and thrown into gaol. Finally Wilkes himself was arrested and sent to the Tower. But, by the operation of a writ of Habeas Corpus, he was immediately brought out again, and chief justice Pratt, before whom he was taken, set him at liberty. The whole practice of issuing general warrants was at once on its trial. Pitt, though he regarded Wilkes with contempt, spoke against them, while acknowledging that in time of war he had used them himself. Before the end of the year they were specially condemned by the judgment of the Court of Common Pleas, and Wilkes recovered 1000*l.* against the under-secretary of state for the seizure of his papers. Meanwhile the sheriffs, acting upon the orders of the House of Commons, proceeded to burn No. 45 of the *North Briton* before the Royal Exchange; but the mob attacked the officiating hangman, rescued the paper, and assailed the sheriffs so violently that they had to retire. Riots broke out in various places, and a jack boot—in a rough spirit of punning upon the cockney pronunciation of the name of lord Bute—was solemnly hanged and burnt at Temple Bar.

During the years that followed, Wilkes's popularity increased rather than diminished. The city, it is true, declined to elect him to Parliament, but the voters of Middlesex returned him at the head of the poll in the hustings at Brentford.* The House of Commons refused to receive him, but he was returned again and again. The lord mayor that year, Samuel Turner, was known to oppose him, and the windows of the Mansion House were broken. For safety in the streets it was necessary that even casual passengers and foreigners should chalk "45" on their hats. The ministers and the king were furious. Wilkes had been declared an outlaw, and he

* Vol. ii. chapter xv.

was summoned before the King's Bench, fined 1000*l.*, and condemned to imprisonment. But twenty times the amount was at once subscribed. Plate, wine, household goods, purses of money, and every possible token of sympathy were showered upon the prisoner. A chandler sent him forty-five dozen of candles. *Wilkes's Head* was the favourite signboard, and long afterwards he used to relate that he overheard an old lady say of him, "He swings everywhere but where he ought." The hopeful prince of Wales, afterwards regent and king, as George IV., is said to have shown his rebellious disposition already, and on one occasion, after he had incurred his father's anger and was in disgrace, is reported to have put his head in at the door of the king's apartment and shouted defiantly "Wilkes and liberty."

The king's popularity was further damaged in the city by an event which took place in 1770. The previous year Wilkes had been elected alderman of Farringdon Without, and William Beckford, who had ruled as lord mayor in 1762, was chosen a second time for the same high office. When, in May 1770, the House of Commons not only refused Wilkes leave to sit, but put in his place a Colonel Luttrell, whom he had defeated at the poll, the Court of Common Council called on lord mayor Beckford to take a remonstrance, couched in very moderate terms, to the king. George did not conceal his displeasure, and the lord mayor, now a very old man, addressed him in a short but respectful speech,* in which he pointed out to the king the loyalty

* Much doubt has been thrown on this occurrence. Horne Tooke has been credited with the composition of Beckford's speech; and it has even been asserted strongly that Beckford never delivered it. But a subsequent refusal to allow him to speak to the king goes to prove the truth of the story, which I cannot persuade myself to reject.

of the citizens, and assured him that whoever, "by false insinuations and suggestions," had alienated his majesty's affection from the city of London was an enemy to his person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of the principles established at the glorious revolution.

These brave words were received by George III. with impatience. No reply was vouchsafed, and when shortly afterwards the lord mayor attended at court with an address of formal congratulation on the birth of one of George's numerous children, he was not admitted to the presence chamber until a lord in waiting had ascertained that no speech was to be made.* Although Beckford's boldness was highly applauded by a vast majority of the citizens, it encountered strong criticism at the hands of a large party in the corporation, yet the recorder, Eyre, who had refused to sign the address of remonstrance, was summoned before the Common Council and declared incapable of any further interference in civic affairs.† A second address was presented in November, to which the king returned a sullen reply, refusing to comply with the prayer of the petition for a dissolution of Parliament. Brass Crosby, who was now lord mayor, was fully as patriotic and spirited as Beckford, and had to suffer for his opinions. The House of Commons at that time, as is well known, did not permit the publication of the debates. They were reported, chiefly by memory, and printed in various periodicals with fictitious names, the monthly reports in the 'Gentleman's Magazine'

* Beckford's conduct on this occasion may remind the reader of the speech of Fitz-Thomas to a very similar king at St. Paul's in 1265. See volume of 'City Adresses,' printed in 1778, p. 20.

† He shortly afterwards resigned, being made chief baron of the Exchequer—no doubt as a reward from the court party for his behaviour in the recordership.

being esteemed the best, and attributed to the famous Dr. Johnson.* The house took deep offence at reports in some of the daily papers. Two printers named Wheble and Thompson were summoned to the bar of the house but did not attend, and the serjeant-at-arms proceeded to the city to seize them, but ineffectually. The government issued a proclamation to arrest them. Finally Wheble was brought by an informer before the alderman then sitting at the Guildhall, who happened to be no other than John Wilkes. He treated the proclamation as waste-paper, and not only set Wheble at liberty, but bound him over to prosecute his captor, who was subsequently fined and imprisoned. Miller, the printer of the *Evening Post*, was arrested by a messenger of the House of Commons. Miller knew the law apparently better than Wheble. He immediately sent for a constable and gave the messenger into custody. Meanwhile Wilkes had been reinforced at the Guildhall by the lord mayor, Brass Crosby, and by Richard Oliver, another alderman. They instantly discharged Miller, and obliged the messenger to give bail for his appearance to answer for having violated the liberty of a citizen.

The excitement in the city was tremendous, and was not much allayed by the next move of the ministry and the House of Commons. The lord mayor and alderman Oliver were ordered to attend at the bar. Wilkes was summoned too, but refused to enter the House except as member for Middlesex. The House upon this specially named the following day for his attendance, and, in order to avoid raising the question, immediately

* Boswell's 'Life,' i. Dr. Johnson's opinion on the ministry is in vol. iv. "Such a bunch of imbecility never disgraced the country. If they sent a messenger into the city to take up a printer, the messenger was taken up instead of the printer, and committed by the sitting alderman."



LORD MAYOR CROSBY'S CUP.

adjourned till the day but one after: but the lord mayor and the alderman were conveyed to the Tower of London and remained there till after the end of the session.

At this time, as has been often pointed out,* the House of Commons represented, not the nation but the ministry. There was reason for the exclusion of a man of Wilkes's character: but the adjournment, with the imprisonment of Crosby and Oliver, shows that the temper of the House was not only unreasonable, but tyrannical and cowardly. It feared to face Wilkes, but it did not fear to make fresh martyrs to the popular cause, and the result only brought the feeling of the citizens into greater prominence. When the session was over the prisoners were released from the Tower. Some days previously it had been resolved by the Common Council to organise a great demonstration in their honour. Accordingly the members attended on Tower Hill in fifty-three carriages, the artillery company forming a guard of honour, and firing a salute of twenty-one guns. The lord mayor, entering his state coach, proceeded, amid the loudest acclamations, to the Mansion House in solemn procession,† and nothing was omitted that could mark the temper of the city. But George III. was not to be taught by such demonstrations. The citizens over and over again protested against the policy which was driving the North American provinces into rebellion. To their most respectful addresses on the subject George returned the briefest and most contemptuous replies. The citizens had commenced by addressing the

* See full account of this affair in Mr. Trevelyan's 'Early Life of Fox.'

† The scene is engraved on a magnificent silver vase, which was presented to Brass Crosby, and is still in the possession of his family, who kindly permitted me to inspect it.

House of Commons. They next presented a petition to the Lords. Wilkes was now mayor (1775), and we may believe very cheerfully undertook the duty of addressing the king. The remonstrance was couched in respectful terms, and was of the common sense character that might be expected. Mercantile men were naturally alarmed at the interruption of trade. Politicians saw the futility of the military arrangements. Humane men were disgusted at the fratricidal war. But the king's reply took no notice of such considerations. "It is with the utmost astonishment," he exclaimed, "that I find any of my subjects capable of encouraging the rebellious disposition which unhappily exists in some of my colonies in North America." He went further, and declared through the lord chamberlain that he would not receive "any addresses, remonstrance, or petition, but from the body corporate of the city." Wilkes in reply wrote to say that "the full body corporate never assemble, nor could they legally act together as one great aggregate body." Their duties were exercised by the civic delegates assembled in common hall. Two legal opinions on the subject were enclosed, and the lord mayor, in the clearest and most uncompromising manner, asserted the rights of the citizens; "I presume," he wrote, "to lay claim, on behalf of the livery of London, to the ancient privilege of presenting to the king on the throne any address, petition, or remonstrance."

The full drift of the king's action in this matter was well understood. Wilkes did not hesitate in his letter to the lord chamberlain to denounce it as only worthy of the Stuarts, and to recall the fate of that "Tarquin race," as he described them. He concluded with a further appeal in favour of the Americans, and as soon

as he had read his letter to the assembly in the Guildhall, it was resolved that whoever advised the king to refuse to receive an address from the lord mayor was an enemy, and that unless the king "hears the petitions of his subjects, the right of petitioning is nugatory." They immediately went on to draw up a new "address, remonstrance and petition," to be presented by the lord mayor, aldermen, and livery, on the importance of the crisis in American affairs. They expressed their disapprobation of "this fatal war," and went on to say that "if anything could add to the alarm of these events it is your majesty's having declared your confidence in the wisdom of men, a majority of whom are notoriously bribed to betray their constituents and their country." The sheriffs were then sent to ask when the king would receive the address. He replied, "At the next levee." They informed him that the livery had determined not to present it "unless your majesty shall be pleased to receive it sitting on the throne." To which the king answered "I am the judge where." When this reply was brought to the lord mayor he declined to attend the levee, and called a meeting in the Guildhall to receive the sheriffs' account of their interview. There was nothing to be done except to direct the members for the city formally to enquire who were the king's advisers.

These events took place towards the end of June, and on the 7th July an address was resolved upon by the corporation, "praying that his majesty would be pleased to suspend hostilities against our fellow subjects in America." This time the king thought it better to receive the lord mayor with due respect, but his reply to the remonstrance was brief and ill-tempered.

The last event of Wilkes's mayoralty was the recep-

tion of a letter from the congress assembled at Philadelphia, thanking the citizens of London for their efforts on behalf of peace. The disastrous effect of George's policy soon became apparent, and though Wilkes in many respects fails to impress us as a true patriot, it must be allowed that his conduct on this occasion well befitted the successor of Walter Hervey, of Gregory Rokesley, and of William Beckford.

George III., as long as his reason remained to him, continued to disregard the remonstrances of the citizens, and learned nothing by his constant experience, as time went on, of the wisdom of the warnings they addressed to him. The Gordon riots in 1780 gave him an opportunity of insulting them. The city was occupied by soldiers, who had orders to disarm all persons and detain their arms. The dissatisfaction which followed was so strong that on the opening of Parliament a kind of lame apology had to be made in the speech from the throne. Yet the city remained loyal, and on George's escape from assassination in 1788, and his recovery from the first attack of insanity in the following year, presented to him addresses breathing fervent affection for himself and his dynasty. On St. George's Day, accompanied by both Houses of Parliament, and having been duly received by the lord mayor at Temple Bar, he went to St. Paul's and attended a thanksgiving service. "The more than triumphal entry of a beloved sovereign," we are told, "filled the mind with the most sublime ideas."*

John Wilkes lost some of his influence as a popular leader when, in 1779, he accepted the office of chamberlain and resigned his aldermanry. From this time his name appears but seldom in the city annals. As age approached he became more decorous in his habits. At

* Allen, ii. 101.

his death, in 1797, he was buried in the cemetery attached to Grosvenor Chapel in South Audley Street, in which for some years he had rented a pew. His epitaph describes him as "John Wilkes, a friend to liberty."

The very year of Wilkes's death the king again refused to receive a petition from the livery, presented by the lord mayor and sheriffs, on the ground that he "received addresses on the throne from the city as a corporate body only." Twenty years had made little change in his character. The ministry of the duke of Portland was exceedingly unpopular, not only in the city, but also in Westminster, where meetings were held to censure it. The citizens were, however, by no means unanimous. Lord Lauderdale, who had become a "citizen and needle-maker" for the purpose, presented himself as a candidate for the office of sheriff, and expected the support of the popular party. He was, however, disappointed, and did not even venture to go to the poll. There was strong rivalry at the time between the livery and the members of the Common Council, but in 1799, when the king again refused to receive a petition from the liverymen, an attempt was made to reconcile their conflicting interests, and the petition, which prayed the king to summon a parliament, was adopted and presented by the Court of Common Council. The government of William Pitt was, on the whole, popular with all classes in the city. The war policy of the great minister was warmly supported. Volunteers swarmed in the streets, and the king was well received when he reviewed them. The death of Nelson and his burial in St. Paul's, the celebration of the "king's jubilee," or the commencement of the fiftieth year of his long reign, and various other events of the kind, form the civic annals of the early part of the nineteenth century. But 1809 saw another outbreak of dissatisfac-

tion. The wretched results of the Walcheren expedition caused great indignation, and an address of remonstrance against the ministers was presented. To this George replied as of old. "He was the best judge," he said, "of the measures adopted by the executive." The livery then drew up a petition. He refused to receive it, but mitigated his refusal by a reference to the failure of his sight. Possibly the old madness was felt to be returning a second time. He never again enjoyed an opportunity of insulting the citizens. After a few months his true condition could no longer be concealed. It was rumoured in October 1811 that something was wrong. Many people had forgotten the short attack twenty-one years before. In November a letter from the secretary of state desired the lord mayor to remain in office "until His Majesty's pleasure could be taken on the appointment of his successor." It is difficult to judge whether this was the legal course. At such an unusual crisis many things not to be legally justified were done; but one of the first acts of the prince regent was to receive the mayor and aldermen, and his reply to their address, which consisted, we are told, partly of condolence and partly of congratulation, was a pleasant contrast to the surly expressions with which his father had so often received them. A desire for reform was mentioned in a subsequent address, and various other petitions and remonstrances were presented, but the prince invariably received them with courtesy; and if some of us, who know more of his life than his contemporaries could learn, find it hard to account for his popularity, we must remember how different was his manner from that of the old king, and how pleasant a change it must have been to be treated with deference where experience had taught them to expect only ill-disguised contempt.

The reigns of the father and his unworthy son exemplified to the full the adage that a good man may be a bad king, and a bad man a good king. Chatham, dying, said of the reign of George III. that "his majesty succeeded to an empire as great in extent as its reputation was unsullied. Seventeen years ago this people was the terror of the world." England was seldom reduced to so low a level, but better times were in store. The victories of Nelson and of Wellington were achieved under the rule of the younger Pitt, whom George III. detested, and of Canning, who came into office as the shadow of insanity was beginning to cloud his mind. Thenceforth he lived, indeed, but had wholly disappeared from view for ten long and eventful years before his death in 1820.

Many changes were wrought in the city. The great wealth which, as always in time of war, had come to the merchants, was spent, at least partly, in works of public utility. London led the way, for example, in prison reform. The indefatigable John Howard, a native of Hackney, but a Bedfordshire squire, drew attention to the state of prisons in England and on the continent before the middle of the eighteenth century. He endeavoured to bring some kind of system into their management. The wealthy classes were most anxious to do something, but no one knew what to suggest until Howard came forward. It is curious to read his recommendations. Had we left our prisons in the state to which he thought they should be raised, they would perhaps be more deterrent than they are now as places of punishment. What prisons were before his humane endeavours had succeeded can hardly be believed. The fact is, our population had increased, indeed nearly doubled, while our accommodation for the pauper and criminal classes was at a stand-

still. The old ideal of a London gaol was a kind of tavern, where a prisoner might take his ease until his trial.* If he was very poor he received a dole. If he was rich he could live as he liked. To punish a man for proved crime by imprisonment only was rare. It did not occur to the rulers that mere detention was a punishment. The prisoner had spacious lodgings, a little more costly perhaps than his private house; he could enjoy the company of his family; he could gamble and drink; or like Bunyan at Bedford, he could work for his living if necessary. The stocks, the pillory, and the post were necessary to strike terror into malefactors. But when the population increased, and a man found a gaol to be a house with few rooms and a teeming population of all classes, with few beds, all let at an enormous rate, with a precarious loaf and poisonous water, the state of a prisoner was much altered. About the same time, the authorities began to find that merely to keep a man in gaol was a hideous punishment, as it was only another way for condemning him to a lingering but certain death. Our "sanguinary code," as it was often called, grew out of this dilemma. We still speak of a "gaol delivery." To condemn a man to prison was to condemn him to slow tortures, gaol fever,† and a short life full of misery. The hulks were little better. Slavery in the plantations was looked upon as a merciful relief. The question was brought home to the authorities in an appalling manner in 1750. The lord mayor, Sir Samuel Pennant, died on the 20th May, of gaol fever caught at the Old Bailey during the sessions; and not the lord mayor

* Howard's 'State of Prisons,' p. 191.

† Howard states his opinion that the number of prisoners who died of gaol fever was greater than the number of those who were executed.—p. 18.

only, but two judges, Sir Thomas Abney and Baron Clark, three aldermen, the under-sheriff, and many lawyers, jurymen, spectators, officers of the court, and of course, many prisoners.

All the London prisons were bad, but Newgate, though it had been several times rebuilt, acquired a pre-eminent reputation * for unwholesomeness. The calamity of 1750 was only one of a number of similar if less fatal outbreaks of fever. Another lord mayor, Winterbottom, died of fever in 1752. We cannot wonder that Newgate was unwholesome in the middle of the eighteenth century, since, so far back as 1419 there was an entry † made in a letter-book at Guildhall to the effect that the atmosphere of the "heynouse gaol of Newgate" is fetid and corrupt. Sir Richard Whittington was lord mayor at the time, and he endeavoured to do something to mitigate the evil. There had been a separate prison for freemen in Ludgate, but Ludgate had been closed, and all kinds of prisoners, including "citizens and other reputable persons," were committed to Newgate, and many died "who might have been living if they had remained in Ludgate, abiding in peace there." Three years later, at his death, Whittington left money to effect an improvement, "seeing that every person is sovereignly bound to support and be tender of the lives of men," as it is said in his will. The prison thus improved was in

* Howard mentions Newgate, the Fleet, Ludgate (a new prison so called in Bishopsgate Street), Poultry and Wood Street Compters, Bridewell, New Clerkenwell Prison, Clerkenwell Bridewell, Whitechapel Debtors' Prison, Tower Hamlets Gaol in Wellclose Square ("This prison is at a public-house, kept by an honest Swede"), St. Catherine's, the Savoy, Tothill Fields Bridewell, Westminster Gatehouse, the King's Bench Prison in Southwark, the Marshalsea, the Borough Compter, the new Borough Gaol, and the Surrey Bridewell.

† Riley, 'Memorials,' p. 677.

existence at the time Howard wrote. The builders, he reports, seem to have regarded in their plan nothing but the single article of keeping prisoners in safe custody. What must the old one have been like if this was the condition of the improved prison? Howard complains that the rooms and cells were so close as to be constant sources of infection. Already, however, the citizens had determined on building a new gaol, but he was not satisfied with it, especially as the old cells for felons condemned to death were to be retained—cells of such a character that “criminals who had affected an air of boldness during their trial, and appeared quite unconcerned at the pronouncing sentence upon them, were struck with horror, and shed tears when brought to these darksome solitary abodes.”*

This old prison subsisted till it was burnt by the Gordon rioters in 1780, the present gaol, which had been founded a few years before, being then in part completed on the southern or Old Bailey side of the gate. The last public act of lord mayor Beckford's life was to lay the foundation-stone of the new buildings. He caught a chill from which at his advanced age he could not rally, and died three weeks later, 21st June, 1770.

In spite of Beckford's and Howard's efforts, Newgate continued for many years longer a disgrace to London. Every humane person who saw the condemned cells spoke of them with horror. When Neald, another philanthropist, visited the prison in 1815 he reported that half the prisoners, and especially the women, were miserably poor, and scarcely covered with rags. It was the custom to try prisoners on a Friday, so as to give the convicts twenty-four hours longer in the world, as Sunday was not counted a legal day, and the modern

* P. 152.

six weeks reprieve was unthought of even by the most humane. There is a curious picture in the 'Microcosm,' by Pugin and Rowlandson,* which represents the interior of the chapel on the Sunday intervening between trial Friday and execution Monday. It shows eleven felons, two of them women, in a kind of central pew, painted black. In the middle of the pew is a table ; on the table is a coffin.

The Gordon rioters made very short work of old Newgate. Dr. Johnson describes the scene in one of his letters. The Protestant rioters went about their task very methodically, but were quite unmolested. They were allowed to act "without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day. Such," reflects Dr. Johnson, "is the cowardice of a commercial place." The gaol fever was not eradicated by the fire. Thirteen years after his followers had destroyed the old prison Lord George Gordon himself died of gaol fever in Newgate, having been imprisoned for a libel.

The benevolent work of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry and other disciples of Howard commenced about this time, and in 1817 the coffin was dismissed from the chapel table and some attempt at classifying the prisoners was made. Mrs. Fry taught the women to knit stockings and other articles, that by selling them their prison fare might be improved. What it was may be guessed, when as late as 1825, a visitor is equally surprised and pleased to find that a regular allowance of food has begun to be made from city funds.

From that day to this improvement has gone steadily forward. The city prison is at Coldbath Fields, and is a

* Vol. ii. p. 208. Several other views of gaols and bridewells may be seen in the same book, which was published in 1809. The combination of the artists was very fortunate.

model institution. Newgate is only used as a temporary house of detention for prisoners awaiting trial, who are conveyed by a subterranean passage into the dock at the Old Bailey, where the Sessions House now occupies all the ground on which the old College of Surgeons, with its dissecting-rooms, the destined end of so many lodgers in the adjoining building, used to stand.

The prison of Newgate is interesting as an example of a building designed for a special purpose, and eminently satisfactory from an architectural point of view. There can be no doubt that it is a prison, just as there can be no doubt that St. Paul's is a Christian place of worship. Dance, the architect, deserves the credit of having built a perfectly simple but perfectly suitable façade: the more so as, though it is three hundred feet long, it has no windows, except in the central part, which is the gaoler's house. The height is only fifty feet, yet the effect is that of a Norman keep. The statues, removed from the old gate, are somewhat incongruous, but the festoons formed of fetters are, if a little grotesque, extremely effective.

At the coronation of George IV. the lord mayor figured prominently. In the Abbey he stood beside the throne, and at the subsequent banquet he filled the old office of butler and received the ancient fee.* But the popularity which had been accorded to the Prince Regent was not continued to George IV. He had long forfeited the respect of those of his subjects who were most often brought into contact with him, and now sought adulation in Scotland and Ireland. The citizens warmly espoused the cause of queen Caroline. When the divorce bill was proposed, the corporation addressed her with words of sympathy, and when it was finally withdrawn, received her in state when she came to St. Paul's to return

* See above, p. 217.

public thanks. Her chief councillor and support seems to have been alderman Matthew Wood, who had been twice lord mayor,* and was much beloved by the citizens. He lived in South Audley Street, and his house was used by the unhappy queen when she came to London. Eminent citizens had now ceased to live habitually in the city, and the great extension of building in all directions, but especially in Bloomsbury, which preceded the peace in 1815, commenced again after a very few years' interval. The change was already beginning which has transformed London. The great palaces of Queen Victoria Street and Lombard Street are inhabited only during the day, and the shopkeepers who live over their shops are few and far between. When the queen died, a few weeks later, it fell to the share of another eminent alderman as sheriff to escort her remains across the country. This was Robert Waithman, to whose courage and coolness it was due that the 14th August, 1821, did not become the date of a frightful riot, if not of a massacre. Unlike Wood, Waithman lived over his place of business, and an obelisk in what is now Ludgate Circus, was set up opposite his house as a testimonial.

The whole character of the city has changed since that time. The population has declined, the population that is, which lives permanently within the old boundaries. It was reduced to little over a hundred thousand in 1861, and is now only half that number. At the same time the rateable value has increased. Streets of brick have become streets of granite. Houses have become palaces. London at the present day rivals Venice in her prime. True, much of the architectural display is unsatisfactory.

* In 1815 and 1816. He was made a baronet in 1837, and was father of Lord Hatherley, and grandfather of Sir Evelyn Wood.

Too many fronts look as if the builder's object was to spend a sum of money without reference to propriety of or proportion of design. But intermingled with such failures we find many examples to show that art is now at a higher level than at any other time since Wren died. The corporation has done much for its own city ; but it has not stayed its hands at the city boundaries. It has not only rendered London a model for cleanliness, light, water, and locomotion and health among the cities of the world, but also has made to the poorer suburbs such magnificent gifts as Burnham Beeches and Epping Forest, as Coulsdon Common and Wanstead Park. True, these advantages may be bought too dear. It is possible that the fall of the corporation of London, however undeserved, may produce no evil results, and lead to no abuses greater than those that now exist, but to judge by the examples of Paris and New York, this is most unlikely. There are certain things which need to be reformed. The parochial charities, for instance, might be utilised more frequently and widely than at present. The upper class of citizens might be inclined more frequently to serve as aldermen and sheriffs.* The terms of admission to the franchise might be revised. The other city companies might be called upon to do work similar to that carried on by the goldsmiths and fishmongers. In short there are many things on which the pressure of public opinion will in time make a change : but the measures, so far as they are known, which seem to be under consideration now, are not so much calculated to improve existing institutions as to remove a body which had political enemies on account of its age, its wealth, and above all its freedom. Coercion and corrup-

* See above in this chapter for the example of an earl who was a candidate for the shrievalty.

tion cannot be applied to London electors as things are now constituted. The suburbs of London are exceeded in good government, cleanliness, and health only by the city of London itself, and by no other city in the kingdom. The change will probably mean a great increase in the rates all over the territory of the new municipality, as before the new constitution has got into working order there will be an immense waste of money and of time.* In fact it needs no sagacity, nothing but the smallest experience, to see that the advantages, whatever they may be, of the change, will not accrue to the generation which makes it, and if only thirty years are consumed in fighting over again the battles which the citizens fought and settled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, their children will be more fortunate than were their ancestors.

The many advantages which accrue to the suburbs at large from the existence in their midst of a body wealthy enough to try great sanitary experiments, to make expensive inquiries into the food supply, to maintain great public charities, to relieve ratepayers in the administration of justice, are perhaps hardly appreciated at their full value. When the lord mayor is dethroned,† and the money which enables him and his colleagues to do these great things is thrown into the common fund it will be too late to look back with regret to the employment of thousands in such arts as upholstery or cookery, which the reformers profess to despise, but which nevertheless enable many very estimable people to earn their liveli-

* The example of the school board is in point here.

† It is obvious that the mayoralty as it is now must be abolished if the Corporation is extended; else we should have a prince among us who would rank next to the queen, and exercise an authority beyond that of any other subject. England could not brook such a monarchy within her own.

hood. The political independence of the city has made it, much more than the universities, a leader in public opinion, especially where great constitutional questions are involved. London carried reform. London abolished the corn laws. London admitted Jews to Parliament. It would be easy to show by a review of the history of the past forty years how great and how good has been the influence of our city on the opinion of the country at large; but I pause here, unwilling to enter into questions of contemporary politics.

The unwritten constitution of the city has, as we have had occasion to see, varied at different times. I have endeavoured to avoid legal terms as much as possible, and have refrained, as far as I could, from descriptions of the various charters which the citizens have received from the crown. In concluding this part of my work, I would venture to point out that a common expression on this subject is erroneous. There is no historical warrant for saying that the liberties of London are founded on royal charters.* On the contrary, the numerous charters, from that of William the Conqueror to the Act of William and Mary, did not so much grant liberties as define and limit them. The most the Norman could offer the city was its original liberty. Since Magna Charta that liberty had been the birthright of every Englishman, but for centuries it had only existed in the city of London.

There have been several commissions on the subject, but so far nothing has been done to change the old constitution. When most of the municipalities were

* Mr. Firth appears to me to fall into this error in several places; but as his views, though influential, are both inconsistent with history and with each other, I need not discuss them here. His opening sentence runs thus:—"The charters of the City of London form the basis of its constitution." Chap. i. p. 1.

reformed in 1835, London, though it had reluctantly received the commissioners, was excepted. Lord John Russell proposed to legislate in 1837, but the strong show of opposition in the city induced him to abandon the idea. In 1854 a commission was appointed on the subject ; and their report is a very interesting document. London, it said, has no governing charter, in which respect it differs from many of the English corporations. The commission went on to remark that it was doubtful whether a general act of parliament would be effective as against a city usage or custom unless it contained an express mention of London. The tendency of the present day is no doubt against this kind of vagueness, and it is very conceivable that mischief might result from it. But as a matter of fact, there is no part of her majesty's dominions so peaceably ordered as the city, and none in which the inhabitants are better satisfied with their own condition and government.

Government bills were introduced in 1856, 1858 and other years, but were never pressed. Nobody wanted them. The slightest opposition was sufficient to defeat them. Mr. John Stuart Mill had the true republican dislike of anything venerable for its antiquity, and the logician's dislike to anything undefined. During the brief time he sat in parliament probably none of the doctrinaire crotchets he expounded brought him less credit than his persistent attacks on the city. Lord Elcho's bill in 1875 was of a different character, but met with a very cool reception, and it is understood that the noble lord, now earl of Wemyss, has changed his views on the subject : or that having been led to investigate the questions involved, he saw the true character of the attack he had been induced to head.

It may be worth while, in conclusion, to place the

present "constitution" before the reader. The lord mayor is the principal ruler of the city. He is annually elected from among the aldermen, who, as a rule, approach the chair in the order of seniority, but any alderman may be elected; and occasionally, as in the case of Beckford, an alderman who has already served is requested to do so again. He is also usually chosen from among those aldermen only who have been sheriffs. The election is made on the 29th September, Michaelmas Day, by the liverymen, or members free of the city companies. The elected lord mayor is presented to the lord chancellor, who expresses the queen's approbation of the choice made by the citizens: and on the 9th November he is sworn at the Royal Courts of Justice. He has precedence immediately after the sovereign and before the royal family, within the city. In other places he ranks as an earl. He is lord lieutenant of the city; a judge of "Oyer and Terminer"; a justice of the peace; and at a coronation officiates as chief butler. He draws a salary of 10,000*l.*, and has the use of the Mansion House, and of its magnificent furniture and plate: but it is understood that few lord mayors, if any, in recent years have kept their expenditure within these limits.

There are twenty-six aldermen, elected by the several wards, except Bridge Without, the senior member of the court being alderman of that ward. The electors are those persons entitled to the parliamentary franchise. The aldermen are justices of the peace, and their court forms the city bench of magistrates, and grants licenses and admits brokers. It elects the Recorder and the steward of Southwark, and several of the minor officials.

The common council is elected in the several wards; some like Farringdon Without return sixteen members,

and others like Bassishaw, four only. Parliamentary voters have the suffrage as in the case of the aldermen. The total number of the common council is 206. They stand towards the city as the house of commons stands to the country at large, and their legislative power within the city is almost as unbounded. There can be no doubt that any reforms needed in the city could be carried into effect by the court of common council without the extraneous assistance of parliament.* The committees of the court do all the work which has made London such an example of healthiness, cleanliness, convenience, and, indeed, magnificence.

* On a recent occasion parliament was applied to for leave to take a day census. Leave was refused; but the same measure being proposed, as it should have been at first, to the court of common council, was passed, and carried into effect.

END OF VOL. I

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